Stereotypes • Enduring Issues • The Hot Spotlight • New Stories to Tell

NOW & THEN

THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

THE CENTER FOR APPALACHIAN STUDIES AND SERVICES • EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
Volume 21, Number 1 Spring 2005

The Media and Appalachia

Portrayals of the Region from Inside and Out

Enduring Images

Up and down the Appalachians during the fall, various farms and communities have sorghum days. Below, men are cooking molasses in Jefferson County, Tenn.

Tobacco harvesting is another common sight, but so, too, are some of the earliest commercial messages—advertisements painted on stores and barns. At right is the oft-photographed "Mail Pouch" building in historic Jonesborough, Tenn. The "Chew Mail Pouch Tobacco. Treat Yourself to the Best" slogan began appearing in the late 1870s throughout the region. Typically for the "ad buy," the company offered the building owner a $5 stipend, free tobacco, or magazine subscriptions.

Beth Kelly

Stephen Marion

Cover illustration by Charlie Daniel (see an interview with him on page 20).
Layout by Hillhouse Graphic Design, Kingsport, Tenn.

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ARTICLES

3 Writing on Appalachia: Beauty, Strength,
37 Leery *Cathy Lentes*

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REVIEWS

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NEWS

33 Archives of Appalachia — *Norma Myers*
34 ***Encyclopedia of Appalachia*** **Project** — *Troy Gowen*
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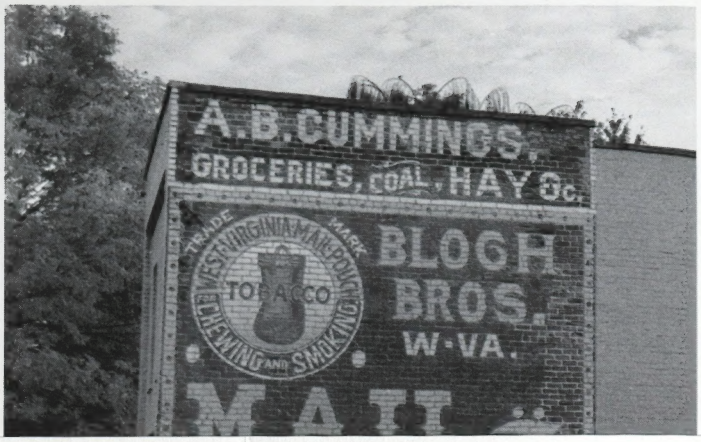

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Stephen Marion

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We welcome electronic submissions of poetry, fiction, articles, personal essays, book reviews and suggestions for books to review, graphics, and photographs concerned with Appalachian life, past and present. Send queries, Microsoft Word documents, or jpeg files of illustrations to nowandthen@etsu.edu. Hard copy submissions must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Upcoming deadlines: All in the Appalachian Family—September 1, 2005 (for Spring 2006), Celebrating Institutions in Appalachia—March 1, 2006 (for Summer 2006). **Address correspondence to:** ***Now & Then,*** Box 70556, ETSU, Johnson City TN 37614-1707, or e-mail: nowandthen@etsu.edu. ***Now & Then*** guidelines are available on the World Wide Web at: cass.etsu.edu/n&t/guidelin.htm.

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ARTICLES

3 Writing on Appalachia: Beauty, Strength, and Stereotype — *Rick Bragg*
5 Careful Where You Cast for Hillbillies — *Norma Wilson*
8 Hollywood Wants Hicks — *Lana Whited*
9 The War: 40 Years Later — *Diana Nelson Jones*
11 One Town's Turnaround Story — *Diana Nelson Jones*
14 Bringing the News Back Home — *Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues*
16 Meth, Mad Cow and Migrants — *Norma Wilson*
17 On Our Minds — *Dorothy Copus Brush*
20 Shop Talk from Rosy's Diner — *Fred Sauceman*
23 Witness to the Local — *Marianne Worthington*

FICTION

26 An Excerpt from *Hollow Ground* — *Stephen Marion*
36 Gossip — *Leigh Ann Preston and Kimberly Spears*

POETRY

35 After High Water — *Sandra Marshburn*
37 Leery — *Cathy Lentes*

REVIEWS

30 *Seekers of Scenery: Travel Writing from Southern Appalachia, 1840-1900* — *Katherine Ledford*
edited by Kevin E. O'Donnell and Helen Hollingsworth
30 *Scribblers: Stalking the Authors of Appalachia* — *Renée Critcher*
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Now & Then — And Then Some

As most of you know, *Now & Then, the Appalachian Magazine* barely escaped extinction last year, so we are doubly proud of this issue, which represents its rebirth and a new initiative.

Starting with this issue, *Now & Then* is linking its themes with targeted exhibits, conferences, or other functions important to the center, ETSU, or nation. For example, the Summer 2005 issue on Car Racing in Appalachia will link with the upcoming Bristol Motor Speedway/ NASCAR exhibit in the Reece Museum.

We think this approach will supplement and support these other events while it provides a larger, more diverse readership for the magazine.

Of course, we're pleased for the longtime support so many of you have given *Now & Then* over the years, and we have been touched by the notes and words of encouragement we received throughout this rough spot in the magazine's history. Many of you have told us that you value the magazine, are pleased to be associated with it, and enjoy reading it.

That's why we're determined to make this comeback a good one, and to develop a marketing plan that will make *Now & Then* stronger than ever. To that end, Norma Wilson, a new journalism faculty member in the department of communication, has joined us as guest editor, and Nancy Fischman of the CASS staff is contributing her design skill and institutional memory to this renewed effort. They've pulled together a dedicated group of volunteers and supporters to move the magazine forward into its third decade.

This issue, Appalachia and the Media, was designed to coincide with a symposium by the same name, set for April 14-15 at East Tennessee State University. The symposium concludes a yearlong, 20th-anniversary celebration for the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services.

A goal of the symposium is to focus attention on the way the region is portrayed in the media — in print, online, on air. The idea is to bring together media professionals, politicians, academics, and the general public to examine past, present, and future coverage.

Partnering *Now & Then* with a major event such as this allows us to take full advantage of material and writers who might otherwise be unavailable to us. For example, Pulitzer Prize-winner Rick Bragg, keynoter for the symposium, is a contributor to this issue, as well. Cartoonist Charlie Daniel, symposium luncheon entertainer, generously contributed the cover drawing for this issue.

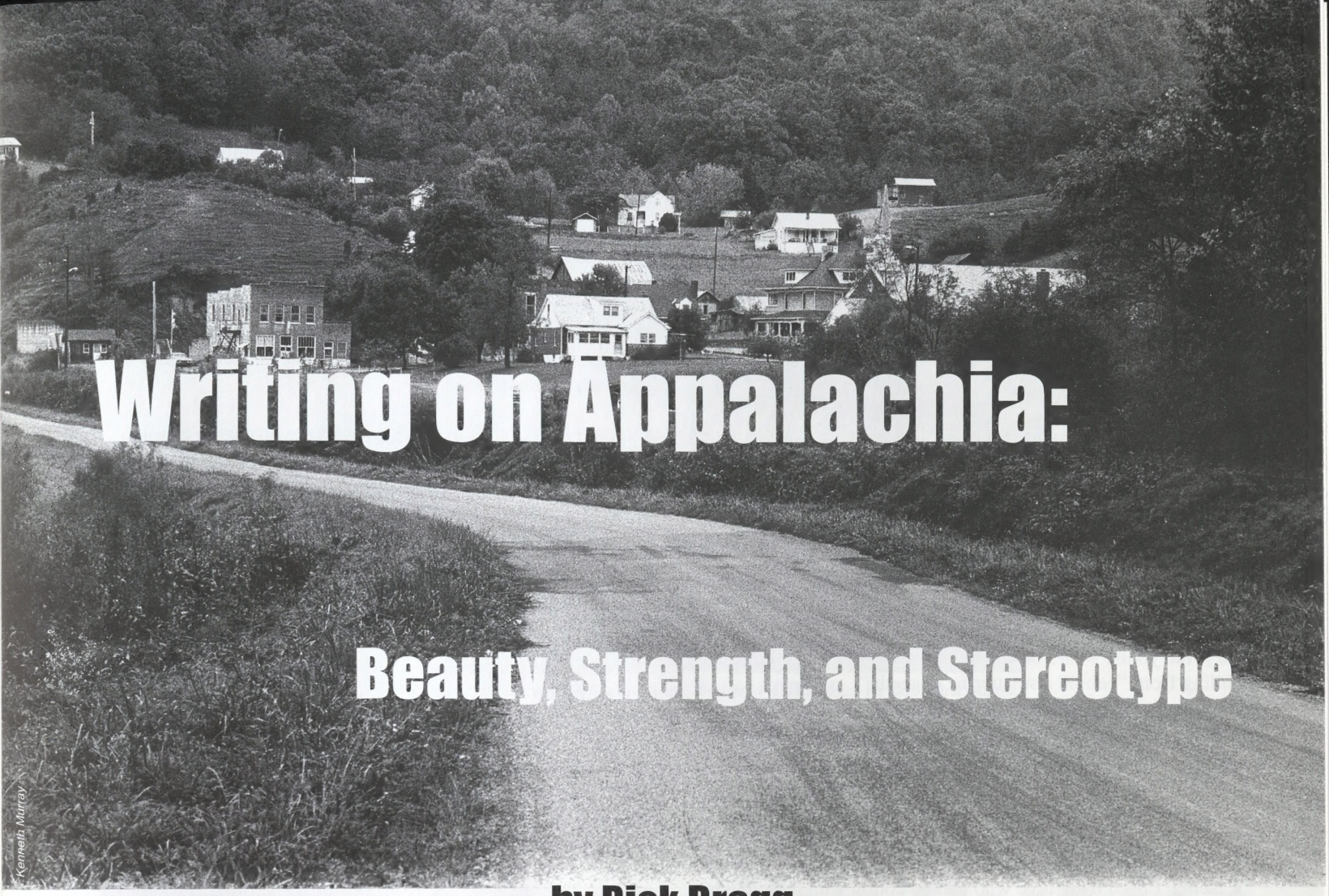
Including their work in this issue of *Now & Then* also widens the reach of the symposium. People unable to attend the two-day event at the Centre at Millennium Park in Johnson City, Tenn., will still be able to reflect on some of the ideas and issues that will be raised and discussed there.

We hope that you will find this new direction beneficial and that you continue to support and nurture the magazine.

— Roberta Herrin
Center for Appalachian Studies and Services

ANOTHER REBIRTH
Built in 2002 in historic Matewan, W.Va., this building, a replica of the original Matewan Depot, seems an unlikely player in the War on Poverty. But the replica, which houses an agents/telegraph office and waiting rooms plus an interpretive museum, helps showcase local natural and cultural history — a new revenue stream. Read more about a town remaking itself, page 11.

Matewan Depot and Replica Museum, photo by David B. Akers



Writing on Appalachia:

Beauty, Strength, and Stereotype

by Rick Bragg

It is rarely an overt thing, the snobbery of words.

I don't even think it is, much of the time, intentional.

Instead, it is usually just a moment of clumsiness, but one that — once committed to the permanence of a newspaper or a magazine story, or a sliver of film — lasts and smarts forever.

People should know better than to use stereotype as a metaphor, should know better than to poke fun at someone because they are from a part of the country that has more haunted ridges than museums, more coal mines than subway tunnels.

The idea of Appalachia, which includes everything from the Ohio Valley to the hill-country South, will always conjure certain stereotypes. The sad part is that, most of the time, those doing the conjuring don't even know they are doing it.

© Marion Ettlinger

Rick Bragg

I teach writing part time at a Southern university and will never forget a story turned in by a young man—a promising writer—that quoted a blue-collar worker from Tennessee. In the story, the young writer described the worker as speaking and smiling from "behind a smattering of teeth."

I stared at it for a long time on the paper.

How, I wondered, do I show the young man how wrong it is, and how much potential for pain such words carry, for my people?

I guess I should have just told him a little family history.

I should have told him that I grew up in the foothills of Appalachia, raised by people who picked cotton with their hands, who staggered sweat-soaked from the textile mill with lint clinging to them like Spanish moss.

I should have told him my aunts worked sewing plants, my uncles worked pipe shops and steel, that I drove to football games behind lumbering coal trucks and broke down truck tires with a chisel and a 10-pound sledge.

I should have told him I ate hot cornbread and cold buttermilk from a jelly glass and potted meat on saltine crackers, that my momma cut the toes out of her $2 sneakers to make homemade sandals and waited to eat until her three sons were done, so we could have the best of what was there.

I should have told him my grandfather made whiskey and fist-fought the Georgia Highway Patrol across beer joint floors, that my grandmother knew her Bible by heart and could cuss like it was going out of style.

I should have told him that Hank Williams, not Tennessee Williams, was our scribe and our prophet, but who we really worshipped was a man named Bear.

I should have told him that I had watched women divine their future in coffee grounds from a turned-over cup, that when my people were in need of prayer they would press their hands to the warm, plastic skin of a black and white television, then send a dollar they couldn't spare to men whose ministries inevitably succumbed to the very sin they preached against.

I should have told him I smoked rabbit tobacco, which smelled like burning trash, that I walked across frozen ground and tore my hands and legs on saw briars, chasing the beautiful voice of a blue tick hound to one tree among millions, to shine a flashlight into the branches and see the red eyes of a possum staring back at me.

I should have told him I raced a Camaro to the edge of destruction on Highway 21 and drove dump trucks loaded with stumps and boulders across mountain roads, my right-hand tapping, nervous, on the Georgia overdrive, that I chopped up rattlesnakes in the pine barrens with a touch — just a touch — of a Poulan chainsaw, as we cleared the land for subdivisions of light vinyl siding.

I should have told him that I have a little brother in prison, that I have another brother who worked 15 years in a factory until it shut down and laid him off, that I think a fist to the mouth is a good answer when a man insults you.

I should have told him that the poverty of the land, worst in the Great Depression but a fact of life for generations, had left tiny graves in a thousand hilltop cemeteries, that generations of men and women had coughed themselves to death with black lung and brown lung, but that even as the mills and the mines chewed up the people, they cherished the work, because it was their salvation.

I should have told him a lot of things, but I didn't.

I told him to try to avoid such things in the future, and then I told him that a man does not smile behind teeth, really, because a person smiles with the muscles of their face, not their jawbone.

And then I moved on to the next paper, and the next.

That same week, I rode a small jet plane to West Virginia. The plane, with seats designed for contortionists and other circus performers, dropped out of steel-gray clouds and fluttered for a moment on the updraft from mountains that seemed to reach for the landing gear.

These were not real mountains, people here scoffed, just hills, but as the plane settled into its approach, still tipping a bit from side to side, I noticed that the runway was really just a mountain with its top hacked off.

"This," I thought, as the plane touched down, "is what it feels like to land on an aircraft carrier."

Later, as I rode through the valleys and along the ridgelines with a friend from Charleston, I knew that I was a poor teacher.

I had told my students to write with a sense of place. What a pretentious thing.

What I had meant was, write about a place with rich language, with imagery and detail. Write in color, I told them.

But I forget to tell them to ignore the stereotypes — descriptions as vivid as any new, fresh, original images — to ignore the stereotypes that were burned into their minds, like overexposed film. N&T

Rick Bragg is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of three books, *All Over But the Shoutin'*, *Ava's Man*, and *Somebody Told Me*, a collection of his newspaper stories written over a 20-year career. He resigned from *The New York Times* in 2003 and has since written a biography of Jessica Lynch entitled *I'm a Soldier, Too*. He was born and raised in Alabama and says he learned to tell stories by listening to the masters—the people of the foothills of the Appalachians. He currently lives in Jacksonville, Ala.

Viacom/Hallmark Channel

A casting call by CBS to find some real Beverly Hillbillies in 2002 hit some snags. The originals — Elly Mae (Donna Douglas), Jed (Buddy Ebsen), Jethro (Max Baer Jr.), and Granny (Irene Ryan) — live on in reruns and syndication, most recently on the Hallmark Channel. The show was a primetime network hit from 1962 to 1971; its creator, Paul Henning, died March 25, 2005, at age 93.

Careful Where You Cast for Hillbillies

by Norma Wilson

What you may find instead, CBS learned, is a resistant strain of folks sick and tired of being stereotyped.

News of CBS's planned casting call for a family to become the next Beverly Hillbillies came on Aug. 27, 2002. It was posted on variety.com at 9:47 p.m. under the headline "CBS hoping hicks click." This time, though, CBS wanted the real deal – a family with Clampett-like roots who would head

to California for a year's stay, living in the lap of luxury on a generous allowance. In exchange cameras would film their every move. The edited results: the network's next big entry into Reality TVland — *The Real Beverly Hillbillies.*

The announcement, reminiscent of *Variety's* notorious headline from decades earlier, "Sticks Nix Hick Pix," had its own playfulness. The posting began, "Come and listen to a story about a man named Ghen, a reality exec at CBS who's got to keep the pipeline fed. Then one day he was shootin' for the moon — and up through his office door came three show-pitching dudes."

The dudes doing the pitching were producers Gary Auerbach and James Jones and documentarian Dub Cornett. The man named Ghen: Ghen Maynard, at the time vice president of alternative programming at CBS, whose *Survivor* series reigns near the top of the food chain in the unscripted (reality) category the network helped found.

"It's rare that you hear an idea and in the first 30 seconds, you instantly get it," Maynard is quoted in the *Variety* story.

The pitch for the show came in a climate when *The Osbournes* were top in Reality TV, *Survivor* had dropped to third in the category, and *The Anna Nicole Show* was soon to join the lineup in a field currently crowded with 30-plus program titles. That CBS had rights to the *Beverly Hillbillies* title perhaps sweetened the pitch Maynard heard in 2002. But no sooner had CBS set up a hotline and begun placing radio ads and recruitment posters in search of these Clampetts Verità than criticism broke loose.

No sooner had CBS set up a hotline and begun placing radio ads and recruitment posters in search of these Clampetts Verità than criticism broke loose.

By the time it was all over (or maybe it isn't over yet; CBS isn't saying so officially), there had been an act of Congress, boycotts by some of the largest labor groups in the country, an ad campaign by a rural advocacy group, a petition blitz by some noted Appalachian authors, and enough media coverage to keep researchers in reading material for months.

Online postings to variety.com began immediately. They labeled the show concept "downright evil" (dabloone on Aug. 28, 2002, 2:55 p.m.) and, sarcastically, "a marked contrast with scripted entertainment that often takes a dim view of hick culture" (Adam, Aug. 28, 2002, 10:35 a.m.). "Actually, I'd like to see the reverse show — take a rich family from Beverly Hills and put them up in a tar-paper shack with no running water," posts Dave (Aug. 28, 2002, 9:22 a.m.).

Blogspots, wire stories and columnists also spread the word, with one of the most entertaining coming from Lana Whited in Roanoke, Va. (reprinted on page 8). Headline writers, too, had a field day. "CBS Has Struck Crude, Appalachia Says," proclaimed the *LA Times. E!online* topped its piece, "Must Hee-Haw TV."

By January 2003, as scouting efforts for show participants progressed and linked to a $500,000 enticement, the Center for Rural Strategies, based in Whitesburg, Ky., bought national newspaper advertising space to try to counter CBS's concept, saying it "belittles and mocks rural people."

That was coupled with letter-writing campaigns, including several by schoolchildren in the region, and petitions sent to executives at CBS and its parent company, Viacom Inc. By May 2003 when Viacom's shareholders were to meet in New York City, labor groups including the United Mine Workers of America, United Steelworkers of America, and Communications Workers of America had joined the opposition.

On May 21, the UMW rallied protesters outside the Equitable Center Building in Manhattan where Viacom shareholders met. The union's view: A program that would ridicule a poor rural family on national television is repugnant, "an insult to a great majority of hard-working and proud people who call rural America home," and perpetuates an outdated stereotype.

For his part, U.S. Senator Zell Miller of Georgia called CBS's program idea "cracker comedy." He spoke against the program in February 2003 on the Senate floor and was among 42 others in Con-

When You Think About Appalachia

In a telephone survey in mid-1999, the Center for Survey Research at The Ohio State University and *The Columbus Dispatch* polled nearly 2,500 residents in Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky to get their views about Appalachia and its economic prospects and to gauge their familiarity with the Appalachian Regional Commission and its mission.

The results were included in a *Dispatch* series, "Appalachia: Hollow Promises," which ran that September and won an award for social justice reporting.

Here are some of the responses to the survey question "When you think about residents of Appalachia, what image comes to mind?"

- Hardworking people, good family values, close-knit families.
- Inbred, industrious.
- Country bumpkin, toothless, friendly.
- Bible-believing people, honest and trustworthy, hardworking.
- Truck and trailer.
- Rundown shacks, no food, kids with no food, newspaper on the walls to keep out the cold.
- Friendliest people on earth.
- "Dueling Banjos," *Coal Miner's Daughter.*
- Mountain men, close-knit, nuclear families, lots of religion.
- River people and outdoorsmen, people with no teeth.
- Hardworking people; just in the wrong place for jobs.
- Poverty, lack of education, no health benefits, no doctors, no jobs.
- Easy country living.
- Big-hearted, generous.
- Trout stream with junk refrigerator behind it.

gress to sign a resolution against CBS's plan for *The Real Beverly Hillbillies.* Several state legislatures, including Louisiana's, soon followed with resolutions of their own.

Partly *The Real Beverly Hillbillies* hit so many nerves because of where the network focused its search for this "family who has a sense of humor about themselves." The network had targeted some of the poorest counties of Kentucky, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas, looking for a multigenerational family that "hasn't been exposed to big-city life or luxuries of life in any way." Those "mountainous, rural areas," deemed prime but remote hillbilly territory by CBS, include major metropolitan areas like Pittsburgh, Charleston, W.Va., Charlotte, and Knoxville.

The WANTED reward poster format of the scouting fliers seeking families or leads to families ($1,000 possible) also rankled. Opponents immediately labeled the process "A Hick Hunt."

Another big difference seemed to be that the original *Beverly Hillbillies,* which aired from 1962 until 1971 and was No. 1 in the nation attracting up to 60 million viewers weekly its first two seasons, was fiction. Actors played the family through 274 episodes. The show spawned its own spinoffs and community, *Green Acres* and *Petticoat Junction* kinfolk among them.

Reality programming is another critter altogether. And if the Osbournes or Anna Nichole want to show their lives to the world, that's one thing. Going for and exposing a *real* family, another.

For now, *The Real Beverly Hillbillies* audition hotline is "not in service for incoming calls."

CBS's last recorded public statement about the program was from Viacom co-chief executive Leslie Moonves in July 2004. "We've never officially gone out of development with that show," he was quoted as telling TV writers at a Television Critics Association meeting on July 18. Ghen Maynard, who led CBS's reality programming development, moved over to NBC in 2004 to become executive vice president of primetime development and get back to the scripted world. (NBC, by the way, had its own quiet version of this rural-to-riches program concept and in May 2004 shot a pilot for *The High Life,* the show's tentative title.)

At either network the conceived program concept is a small segment in the bigger media and entertainment industry. Viacom, for example, with $26.6 billion in revenue in 2003 and 122,770 employees, has media holdings that besides CBS Television and News include MTV, BET, CMT, KingWorld, Comedy Central, Simon & Schuster, and 30 others.

For CBS, *The Real Beverly Hillbillies* is "a concept in development" with "no decision, no deadline, no timetable on a decision."

"It's a great fish-out-of-water story," CBS and Viacom execs noted on more than one occasion. That seems to depend on who's tagging the fish and who's stocking the pond. N&T

Norma Wilson joined the department of communication at East Tennessee State University in August 2004. She is guest editor of *Now & Then* and a professor of journalism.

CBS plans to put a rural family on display in new Beverly Hillbillies "reality" show:

"Imagine the episode where they have to interview maids," chortled one CBS executive.

How many ways can one TV network get it wrong? No. 1: Pick the group of Americans about whom disparaging stereotypes go almost unchallenged: the people who live in rural America. No. 2: After a "hick hunt," as one headline put it, relocate an entire "lower middle class" rural family to a Hollywood mansion. No. 3: Revive the *Beverly Hillbillies* label and slap it on a cheap-to-produce reality show for even cheaper laughs. No. 4: Let the real-life humiliation begin.

It can't be very reassuring for the shareholders of Viacom – which owns CBS – that CEO Les Moonves thinks network TV is an ethics-free zone where profits come before social responsibility. Does the FCC agree with Moonves? What about CBS affiliates? Go to www.ruralstrategies.org and ask them.

Watching rural people being ridiculed in front of a national audience may be CBS's notion of entertainment. But for most of us, mocking a group of rural Americans who have endured, despite hardship and inequity, is more than just offensive. It raises troubling questions about CBS management and the advertisers sponsoring these programs.

There are lots of things CBS could show us about rural America. Some things, like the realities of poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation, are painful to talk about, challenging to hear. Others, because of the grit, courage and faith of rural families and communities, might actually teach a thing or two to privileged entertainment executives who think it droll to "interview maids."

CBS CEO Les Moonves may fly over rural America in his corporate jet but that doesn't give him the right to look down on the hard-working people who live there. CBS executives may think humiliating real rural families is just another way to sell ads. Help us prove them wrong. Go to www.ruralstrategies.org. Let's tell CBS and its advertisers that we're not buying.

Center for Rural Strategies
46 East Main Street, Whitesburg, Kentucky 41858
Phone: 606-632-3244 / www.ruralstrategies.org
info@ruralstrategies.org

www.PublicMediaCenter.org

Courtesy of the Center for Rural Strategies

The Center for Rural Strategies sponsored ads in *The New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today,* and *Los Angeles Times,* among others, calling into question the CBS *Real Beverly Hillbillies* concept.

Hollywood Wants Hicks

by Lana Whited

Lana Whited

Aug. 30, 2002

Come and listen to my story 'bout a show
I dread.
A Hollywood producer wants a family
that ain't fed,
Wants to put 'em in a mansion with a hot
tub and a pool,
And to have the viewers laughin' while
the family acts the fool.

For ratings, that is.
Advertising dollars.
Fools' gold.

I offer this little ditty to CBS as the theme song for the new reality TV show it's considering. The trade paper *Variety* broke the story [in August 2002] that CBS is searching for a "multi-generational family" from a "mountainous, rural area" to play the real McCoys — I mean, Clampetts — in a reality TV-style *Beverly Hillbillies.*

Network executives expect to find their stars in Arkansas, Tennessee, West Virginia, Kentucky, or North Carolina and relocate them to a Beverly Hills mansion. They are looking for what Ghen Maynard, [then] "alternative programming executive" at CBS calls a "fish out of water" experience.

Reality TV has been a staple in our entertainment diet since the debut of *Survivor* in 2000. We have seen the good *(ICU: Arkansas Children's Hospital)* and the bad *(The Anna Nicole Show).* Now, it seems, we are about to witness the ugly.

The REAL *Beverly Hillbillies* first aired in 1962. It drew more viewers than any other show in its first two seasons and quickly inspired two spin-offs: *Petticoat Junction* and *Green Acres.* By 1965, CBS was nearly specializing in down-home programming, also broadcasting *The Andy Griffith Show* and its spin-off *Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.* Soon the network added the variety show *Hee-Haw.*

After the 1971 season, CBS canceled *The Beverly Hillbillies, Petticoat Junction, Green Acres, Gomer Pyle* and *The Andy Griffith Show* (although it had begun running *Mayberry R.F.D.*). The successful sit-coms of the '70s were exclusively urban: *All in the Family, Mary Tyler Moore, The Jeffersons, Sanford and Son,* and *Maude.* Obviously, CBS had made a conscious decision to rein in the rednecks.

This was not because the programs weren't popular. When CBS pulled the plug on *The Beverly Hillbillies, Petticoat Junction* and *Green Acres,* all were still in the Top 20. The problem was that the loyal viewers of these shows weren't the young, suburban and urban, relatively affluent audience CBS was looking for. Instead, they were rural and older people without much disposable income.

So one wonders what audience CBS is targeting with the new *Hillbillies.* Obviously, reality TV has captivated the younger audience, but will they tune in to *Abner and Daisy Mae Go to Hollywood?* This is exactly what Appalachia does **not** need: a new generation of Americans who think we're hicks. It's one thing to ask viewers to laugh at actors portraying hicks and quite another to ask us to laugh at the hicks themselves.

In her brilliant essay "Where Did Hillbillies Come From?" in *Back Talk from Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes,* my friend Sandra Ballard states perfectly my feelings about *The Beverly Hillbillies:* "even now, when I tune in to watch reruns, my analytical mind cautions, 'You really shouldn't laugh—this show shamelessly portrays mountain people as comic fools' … [but] I just can't help myself."

I am not ashamed of how much I like *The Beverly Hillbillies.* It was a terrific show, and its social satire was a double-edged sword. It exposed the provincialism of the Clampetts and the pretentiousness of the Drysdales. Jed Clampett was always the voice of simple good sense. Of the Clampetts, Ballard writes, "They know they are ignorant of city ways, but they also know they learned about everything they value before they ever left the mountains."

The Drysdales, by contrast, learned everything they know on Rodeo Drive. During a CNN *Crossfire* discussion of *The Real Beverly Hillbillies* Thursday night (Aug. 29, 2002), James Carville said, "The difference between people from Beverly Hills and people from the Ozarks is that in Beverly Hills, the jewelry is real and the people are fake. In the Ozarks, the jewelry is fake and the people are real."

The reality TV show I'd like to see is the one where some network settles Milburn and Margaret Drysdale down in a coal town in West Virginia or Kentucky. This might be the theme song for that show:

Come and listen to my story 'bout some
former millionaires;
They've moved to the hills, to a shack
that needs repairs.
They're practically a-starvin' 'cause they
never learned to cook,
And they learned to hang their washin'
by a picture in a book.

Pull up a chaise longue…
Take your Guccis off.
Au revoir, now, ya' hear?"

Lana Whited lives on a farm in western Franklin County, Va., and teaches English and journalism at Ferrum College. Her latest work is *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter,* a collection of critical essays by an international group of scholars. You can see more of her columns at www.roanoke.com/columnists/whited. Column reprinted by permission of *The Roanoke Times.*

The War: 40 Years Later

by Diana Nelson Jones

How are things faring four decades since LBJ made Appalachia the poster region for the country's War on Poverty? Here's an overview.

In November 2000 as the United States was digging its way through the Florida presidential election recounts, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette *writer Diana Nelson Jones and photographer Steve Mellon offered readers a three-part series that dug through the history of Appalachia's war on poverty. Excerpts are reprinted here by permission. You can find the entire series, "Appalachia's War," which ran Nov. 26, 27, and 28, 2000, at www.post-gazette.com. The series won an honorable mention from the Pennsylvania Newspaper Publishers Association.*

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson leapt over a gulley full of water into Tommy Fletcher's yard along Route 3 in Inez, Ky. Photos show an entourage in the foreground of Fletcher's shack, where Johnson declared, "I have called for a national war on poverty. Our objective: total victory."

The implication was clear: If this was war, Appalachia was ground zero, home to the poorest of the poor, the very definition of rural poverty. Over the decades, federal billions have poured into the region.

The results, as you might expect, have been mixed. Appalachia has struggled toward prosperity and in most places has come a very long way. In others, you can still look around and say, "What war?"

Four-lane crossroads sport national retail franchises, malls, and hotels. Two-lane arteries pass tidy ranch houses and doublewide trailers lined in hollyhocks; there are pizza joints beside beauty shops beside tanning salons beside pretty white chapels; you find cinder-block stores that sell bait and pepper plants, cottage-like restaurants that specialize in hot dogs, and stands of pine that partially hide chalet-style subdivisions.

Even down its narrowest roads and

AP/World Wide Photos

On April 24, 1964, Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson visited Inez, Ky., and the property of Tommy Fletcher, a father of eight whose living conditions epitomized the squalor that characterized Appalachia for decades. It was from that porch that Johnson declared the nation's War on Poverty.

through its quietest hamlets, shacks these days aren't common. Some roads remain unpaved and some wreak havoc on your shocks, but they're as likely to lead to a cozy log lodge in the woods as to a peeling trailer surrounded by contorted lawn furniture.

A majority of Appalachia is now middle class, and parts of the region are growing faster than the nation. Still, nothing has adequately replaced the loss of coal jobs, and the few urban areas are not large or vigorous enough to spawn much outward growth. The bulk of Appalachia remains small towns and hamlets where any job's a good job, there isn't much to do, and residents greet visitors warily, saying, "You musta got lost."

Steve Mellon/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Tommy Fletcher at his home in 2000, the place remains much the same as when Johnson visited except for a new porch and railing.

On evening newscasts the night of President Johnson's visit, Appalachia suddenly found itself in the glare of a national spotlight. It showed a gangly swath of rugged land whose people resembled the politically underserved of a Third World country. Cameras roved over swayback porches, battered cars on cinder blocks, barefooted children, toothless men, and polling places where dead people had been voting for years. (The 1960 West Virginia census counted 19,879 voting-age residents in Mingo County — with 30,331 registered to vote.)

Many Appalachians cringed at the images that entered their living rooms and at the stark contrast between the illiterate isolates and the snappy New York newsmen who fed the nation an enduring stereotype. The attention gave new meaning to the word *rural.* The sweeping farmlands of the Midwest and picturesque hamlets of New England had a poor-cousin counterpart in Appalachia, where *rural* meant bad drinking water, no decent system of waste disposal, no firehouse, no police, no hospital, no sidewalks, no entertainment.

Geographically isolated for generations, even from one another, Appalachians first had to fight a pall over their spirit, a poverty of self-confidence and experience. What roads there were brought hundreds of activists and volunteers into Appalachia in 1965, revealing dire conditions you can still see in some places, but not from the four-lane highways.

Steve Mellon/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Health care arrives on wheels. Medical resident Donna Bolden checks 6-year-old Christopher Maynard as his mother, Connie, waits. The Maynards, from Salt Rock, W.Va., were among several hundred rural families the West Virginia Children's Health Project van served in 2000.

Money began arriving with passage of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1965, the same year Congress established Medicare, Medicaid, Head Start, and VISTA. The Appalachian Regional Commission was set up with a domain of 391 counties in 12 states. Mississippi, a non-Appalachian state, became the 13th in 1967. The regional commission now oversees federal development programs in 406 counties.

Although poverty activists complain the "war" didn't last more than five years, and many policy experts believe the war was lost, progress is indisputable.

One in three Appalachians was poor in 1965. The poverty rate by the new millennium closely shadowed that of the nation at about one in 14. The percentage of high school graduates doubled, to 68 percent, by 1990. The number of counties originally considered "distressed" — 219 — has been cut in half.

Yet despite the longest economic expansion in U.S. history during the 1990s, 111 Appalachian counties remain economically distressed — one-fourth of the total.

Parts of Appalachia still rely on ruinous septic tanks and well water tainted by mining residue. Others have no garbage pickup. Many small-town hospitals are closing as the health-care industry consolidates, requiring people to drive as far for health care as they did in the 1960s, before most small towns had clinics.

Appalachia, that rugged swath of America hugging the mountains from Georgia to New York, is climbing out of desperation. As the region entered the 21st century, much of it wears the standard consumer look of middle America — cities seeing unprecedented growth and a share of dot-com millionaires, good roads, chain retail stores and restaurants, houses stamped with the seal of suburbia, consolidated schools.

This may be what President Lyndon Johnson meant in 1964 when he sought for Appalachia "the abundance which has been granted to the rest of the nation."

Towns once steeped in coal are now courting tourists. Asheville, N.C., is a second-home boomtown. Aerospace is taking off in Huntsville, Ala., and has helped catapult north-central West Virginia to a growth rate in the late 1990s exceeding the national average. Telemarketers and factories that make wood products, car parts and processed foods are among the 22 businesses recently recruited by eastern Kentucky.

The Appalachian Regional Commission is marketing regional crafts around the world, and a non-profit organization in Berea, Ky., trained 115 women entrepreneurs of 51 small ventures that have grossed $4 million plus in annual sales.

In 1965, one in three Appalachians was poor. By the new millennium the poverty rate closely shadowed that of the nation, at about one in 14.

Scores of flattened mountains created by strip mining lie above the region's hollows like elevated prairies. With mesas, cutaways and dry arroyos, they have proved hospitable to everything from golf courses and wineries to high-tech service centers.

Some of the changes, of course, fall into the not-exactly-what-we're-looking-for-but-we'll-take-it category: three prisons in eastern Kentucky; Wal-Mart, which entered the region in the 1980s, today providing more jobs in West Virginia than any other single employer.

But Norman Clark, executive director of the McDowell County, W.Va., Redevelopment Authority, says a Wal-Mart-anchored retail complex along the new four-lane highways in his county would be a godsend. The county's population of 106,000 in 1960 has dwindled to less than 28,000, and at least a quarter of its people are unemployed.

Others fear Wal-Mart is just another corporate giant that, like the coal mines, will lay off people when times turn sour and that, unlike the mines, doesn't pay very well. "Five thousand people working at Wal-Marts in this state don't equal 400 coal jobs," observes David Akers, who works in a coal-related industry in Matewan, W.Va.

In 1999, 35 years after Johnson declared war on poverty in Appalachia, then President Bill Clinton toured the region as part of his six-stop America's New Markets tour. His aim was to direct "the flow of opportunity and investment into some of the most stubborn pockets of poverty." He called for venture capital loans, grants of $180 million for small businesses in the region, bridges to the digital divide. N&T

Feature writer Diana Nelson Jones calls herself a daughter of Appalachia. Her family is from Shinnston, W.Va., and she began her newspaper career at the *Huntington Herald Dispatch*. She has worked at the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* since 1990. Photographer Steve Mellon has roots in eastern Kentucky.

One Town's Turnaround Story

Courtesy of Mike Gioulis, Historic Preservation Consultant

The view along Mate Street in Matewan, ca. 1920. The building on the corner is the Matewan National Bank.

In 1997, Matewan, W.Va., officially became historic. The designation produced instant flood protection for the little town, and the feds released $18 million for a floodwall. It was like a dog letting go of a sock after 50 years; Matewan 'bout near fell down from the shock.

In spite of 36 major floods since 1949, the most significant notice anyone had ever taken of the town, not counting filmmaker John Sayles, was when Baldwin-Felts detectives came in on the train to evict union-organizing miners from company houses in 1920. Ten people died in the ensuing riot.

After the 1977 flood almost wiped out the whole town, it took 20 years for flood-relief money to show up.

Established in 1897 when the Norfolk & Western Railroad opened the valley to the Williamson coalfields, the town, with a population of about 600 these days, is looking for an opening to the future.

The new floodwall actually makes it look more isolated, but the guest book at the Matewan Development Center and Museum bears the signatures of visitors from places as far-flung as Orlando, Fla., the Netherlands, and Butte, Mont.

Courtesy of Mike Gioulis, Historic Preservation Consultant

With an influx of federal flood control funds, the town of Matewan was able to consider restoration projects and historic preservation.

"The person from the Netherlands is originally from here," says Joyce Dyar, manager of the center. She also is one of many caretakers of the story of the Hatfields and McCoys, Matewan's most famous families.

The story of their feud has been so comically abused by stereotype as to be unrecognizable, she says. Both families, far from being shoot-'em-up hillbillies, had status and power. "And every incident went to trial."

Building a new destiny for Matewan is a slow go. Former Mayor John Fullen, who helped plan the museum, says several companies, including Massey Coal Co., contributed $20,000 a year for three years to get it started. The process has involved getting the federal government to return land to the town and petitions to the state and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Matewan's development plan includes establishment of a weekly newspaper, a Coal Heritage corporation, and a trail that links the sites of the area's labor history. It calls for greenways, a scholarship program, a public radio station, and a folklife center that would archive, interpret, and dramatize Matewan's history.

Dyar sounds hopeful when she says tourism may overtake coal as Matewan's next big industry, but others think it's unlikely to pick up coal's slack.

From the tavern on one end of town to the seed store on the other, downtown Matewan is 265 feet long. Its brick buildings have old-fashioned awnings and flower beds line a raised sidewalk. Tourists number in the hundreds.

Among them: James Whitmore, of Illinois, and his wife. Whitmore worked at a mining supply company in the area in the early 1960s and had seen Sayles' 1987 movie, *Matewan*. "The roads have changed," he observes, "some of 'em. Prestonsburg and Pikeville sure have changed. So has Williamson. They're so much larger than they were when I was here. Everything's built up along the roads now. It's like everywhere else. You have McDonald's and Hardee's, whereas you used to have to eat at little country restaurants. It's all there was."

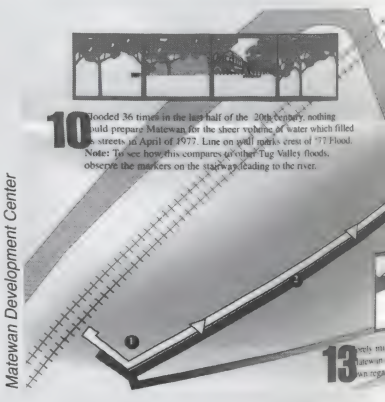
Robert McCoy, a former mayor, sees Matewan's improvements this way: "It's not much better, but it's not worse." A real McCoy himself, he said the Hatfield-McCoy picnic in June brings so many tourists into town, the museum makes about $5,000. "Otherwise, it's a few a day."

Edward Nenni, a town councilman and owner of Nenni's Department Store, says his business, family-owned since 1909, has taken some big hits, the worst since 1977 when the flood water rose to the ceiling. "Our business has dropped 60-70 percent," he says.

His forebears sold fine men's suits; he sells Hatfields & McCoys T-shirts. "When you go after the 'history dollar,' it kills your retail. But we'll see. Maybe it's just gonna take some more time." — **DNJ**

Courtesy of Mike Gioulis, Historic Preservation Consultant

The view down Mate Street, ca. 1998. The Old National Bank Building is at the far corner. Around a thousand tourists visit the town each year. Matewan leaders hope tourism will be the town's new industry, replacing coal mining.



Matewan Development Center

Using History as an Economic Booster

Located on the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy River, Matewan was founded in 1897 when the Norfolk and Western Railway entered the valley to open the Williamson Coalfield. As a stop on the N&W's main line, the town supplied goods to the surrounding mining communities.

Matewan is well known as the site of a bloody confrontation on May 19, 1920, between townspeople, miners, and mine company detectives. At that time the United Mine Workers of America was attempting to organize the area's coal miners. Those who joined the union were fired and evicted from their company-owned homes. In town near the railroad tracks, Chief of Police Sid Hatfield and Mayor Cable Testerman encountered Baldwin-Felts detectives who had been hired to evict miners. After an argument, shots were fired leaving the mayor, seven detectives, and two miners dead. Sid Hatfield emerged as a hero for the miners but was gunned down a year later by retaliating detectives on the McDowell County Courthouse steps in Welch. Union activist Ed Chambers was killed along with Hatfield. Their deaths touched off many disturbances, including the armed march of miners through the southern coalfields, culminating in the showdown at Blair Mountain in Logan County between miners, operators, and federal forces.

—from "Matewan: A Walking Tour," Matewan Development Center, Inc.

Flooding has been as much a part of Matewan's history as the Hatfield-McCoy feud and the coal mine wars of the 1920s. In 1974, a United States Army Corps of Engineers' planner described Matewan as having the most severe flooding problem in America, an observation made before the catastrophic floods of 1977 and 1984. In 1953 alone, in the short period between February 15 and March 15, there were four floods that damaged the community.

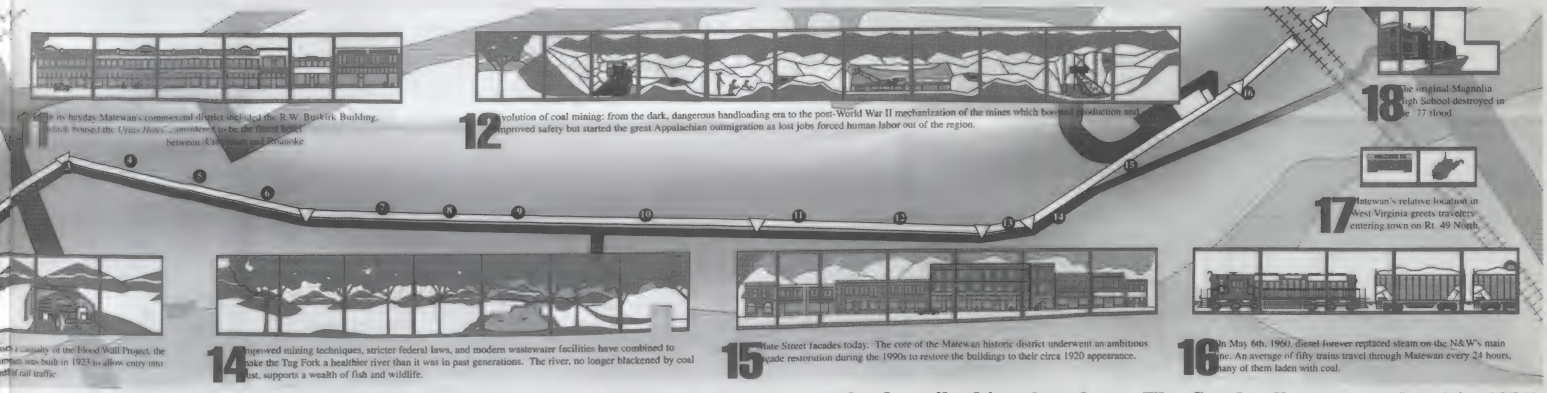
Two brochures direct visitors to points of historical interest in town.

Beginning in the 1950s, a valley-wide effort was made to gain flood protection. Local leaders trooped to Washington to petition for help. Over the next 25 years the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was directed to study the feasibility of various flood protection plans. The Panther Creek, Knox Creek, and Tug Fork dam proposals were studied and restudied, all with the same finding: the projects were not considered to be cost feasible. Then came the great flood of 1977.

The 1977 flood brought national attention to the terrible flooding problem in the Tug Valley. The televised images of valley residents evoked national sympathy. U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia was successful in achieving legislation to waive the cost-benefit ratio law requirements. Byrd's measure allowed for the authorization of the series of flood protection projects that now protect Matewan and other Tug Valley communities.

Construction of the Matewan floodwall began in 1992 and was completed in October 1996. The wall is 2,350 feet long and varies in height from six to 29 feet above finished grade. The floodwall was constructed upon a wide fill/levee structure designed to reduce the height of the floodwall. The wall's surface is textured by vertical fluting and graphics depicting the history of Matewan and the Tug Valley.

—from "The Great Wall," Matewan Development Center, Inc.



The Great Wall displays Matewan's history in a series of graphic panels, described in a brochure. The floodwall was completed in 1996.

The IRJCI wants to keep rural issues on the national — and community — agenda.

Bringing the News Back Home

by the IRJCI Staff

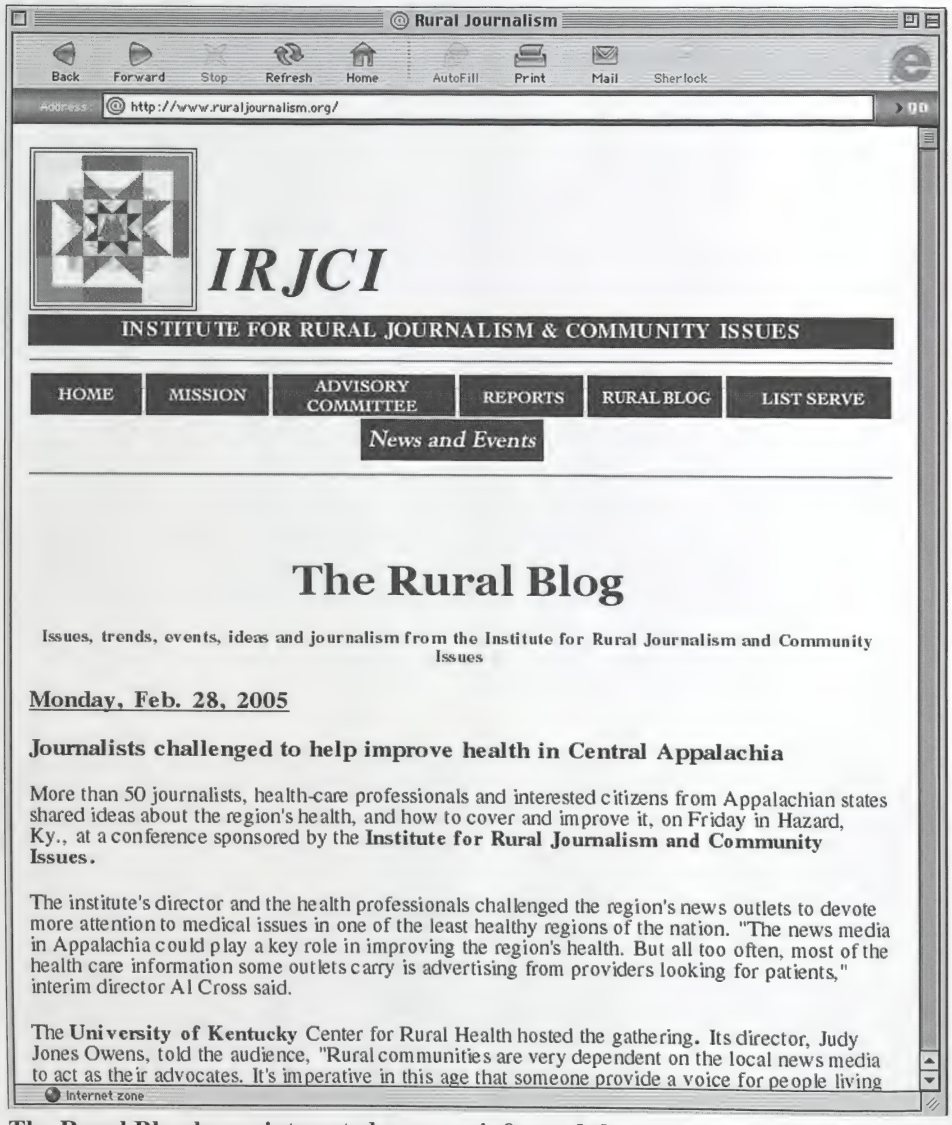
When Rudy Abramson retired from the Washington bureau of the *Los Angeles Times* in 1993, he kept traveling in Appalachia, a region where he had done environmental and other reporting. With deadlines facing him less frequently, he had time to reflect. And what he concluded was that the sense of community in the region was fading. He attributed that partly to the fact that fewer local news outlets were defining the public agenda for their communities or playing a strong role in their civic infrastructure.

"He didn't see as many crusading, courageous newspapers in the coalfields as he had before," says Al Cross, a native of the region and a former weekly newspaper editor and manager, who at the time was political writer for *The Courier-Journal* in Louisville, Ky.

Abramson, Cross, and their friend Al Smith, a former weekly publisher in Kentucky and Tennessee, discerned several causes for the phenomenon they observed — and found it wasn't limited to Appalachia. It was happening all over rural America.

"Some second- and third-generation newspaper owners didn't have as much zest for battles in the public arena," Cross says. "Many papers had been bought by chains that squeezed news budgets in order to keep stock prices high and pay off debt incurred by the purchase. And there was also a declining sense of community, which was both a cause and effect of the media decline."

In Abramson's view: "Communities


Rural Journalism
Back
Forward
Stop
Refresh
Home
AutoFill
Print
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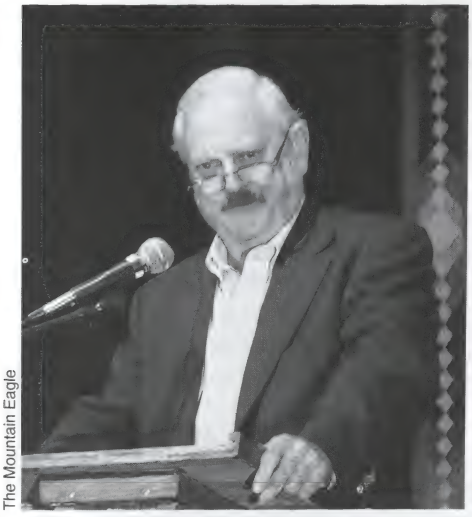
Sherlock
http://www.ruraljournalism.org/
IRJCI
INSTITUTE FOR RURAL JOURNALISM & COMMUNITY ISSUES
HOME
MISSION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REPORTS
RURAL BLOG
LIST SERVE
News and Events
The Rural Blog
Issues, trends, events, ideas and journalism from the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues
Monday, Feb. 28, 2005
Journalists challenged to help improve health in Central Appalachia
More than 50 journalists, health-care professionals and interested citizens from Appalachian states shared ideas about the region's health, and how to cover and improve it, on Friday in Hazard, Ky., at a conference sponsored by the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues.
The institute's director and the health professionals challenged the region's news outlets to devote more attention to medical issues in one of the least healthy regions of the nation. "The news media in Appalachia could play a key role in improving the region's health. But all too often, most of the health care information some outlets carry is advertising from providers looking for patients," interim director Al Cross said.
The University of Kentucky Center for Rural Health hosted the gathering. Its director, Judy Jones Owens, told the audience, "Rural communities are very dependent on the local news media to act as their advocates. It's imperative in this age that someone provide a voice for people living
Internet zone

The Rural Blog keeps interested persons informed through e-mail alerts when new headlines are posted (see sidebar, page 16).



The Mountain Eagle

Rudy Abramson listens to a question at a meeting at the IRJCI.

are losing their identity. There are a lot of reasons for that — greater mobility, faster and less expensive communications, and so on. It's a sad thing, because communities provide the foundation and the continuity for civic life."

The modern roads built in Appalachia and other "topographically challenged" regions also play a part. Residents who once shopped in small, county-seat towns are now more likely to drive to regional trade centers, where they find a Wal-Mart or other big-box store — the advent of which has undercut the traditional retail base in both the small town and the regional center.

"That retail base has long been the linchpin of revenue for rural newspapers, which now send salespeople to the regional centers, further eroding the sense of community," Cross says.

Abramson thought the problem could be addressed by a journalism institute that would help, encourage, and inspire rural journalists to reclaim their essential role in the civic infrastructure — by helping them work with each other, connecting them with experts at regional universities, and regularly feeding them story ideas and sources. It would be called the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues.

Abramson took the idea to Smith, who found support at the University of Kentucky from President Lee Todd and Provost Michael Nietzel. Smith and Cross added to UK's support by rounding up $30,000 from the Appalachian Regional Commission, of which Smith was federal co-chair in 1979-82, and $25,000 from the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation of the Society of Professional Journalists, of which Cross was president in 2001-02.

Other journalists and academics at UK and other universities were recruited for an ad hoc committee that held a series of conferences and conducted research in 2002 and 2003 in Central Appalachia, which was designated the Institute's initial study area.

The Institute's academic partners are at Appalachian State University, East Tennessee State University, Eastern Kentucky University, Marshall University, the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Washington and Lee University, and West Virginia University.

The committee and UK officials also sought financial support to continue the effort, and in 2004 the Institute received $250,000 from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and $50,000 from the Ford Foundation. That money enabled the university to hire the first full-time staffer for the Institute — Cross, who is interim director and has applied for the job of permanent director. He began work Aug. 1, 2004, and soon began publishing The Rural Blog, a daily compendium of rural events, trends issues, and journalism, emphasizing Central Appalachia but looking at all of rural America.

The Rural Blog is designed to help journalists, both rural and metropolitan, identify what rural issues are resonating across the country, and to alert rural journalists to learn what's happening beyond their county lines. The blog and much other information is available at www.ruraljournalism.org.

"The fact we were able to get that Internet address shows that no one else is doing quite what we're doing," Cross says. "There are other centers for community journalism, but they focus mainly on the craft of the profession and the business of newspapering.

"We try to advance the craft, but we are mainly a public-policy institute for

The Mountain Eagle

Tom and Pat Gish, longtime publishers of *The Mountain Eagle,* are the recipients of the Institute's first award recognizing journalists who provide public service through journalism in rural areas.

Courier-Journal

Al Cross worked with Rudy Abramson to find funding to get the Institute started and is now interim director.

rural journalists — and urban journalists who cover issues that affect the 60 million people living in rural America. That's one reason our name is so long. We want to give full emphasis to issues."

The Institute focuses on the key issues of education, economic development, health care, and the environment. Its first conference, at Hazard, Ky., in February 2005, was "Covering Health Care and Health in Mid-Appalachia," with national leaders in rural health. The Institute hopes to fund support for an annual health-care conference.

"We are also becoming more interested in access to broadband Internet service, which has implications not just for economic development but for education and quality of life," Cross says. "Broadband today is something like electricity was in the 1930s, unavailable at reasonable prices in many rural areas."

Politics, broadband, sprawl, jobs, health care and a goat alert ...
— subject line for the alert to the 12/13/04 Rural Blog posting

Advances in technology and changes in rural economics and culture put even more pressure on rural news outlets, notes Abramson, who is chair of the Institute's national Advisory Board.

"Unless local and regional media adapt to developing technologies, economic change, and new ownership patterns, they are going to squander their historic role of energizing public life, providing community identity, and promoting citizens' right to know and be heard," he says. "It's a very serious thing. It gets right to the core questions of how people are going to live in the future, whether we are going to have living communities, or just disassociated collections of houses inhabited by strangers and connected to their individual worlds by wires and satellite dishes."

The Institute also tries to explore national, regional, and state issues that have local impact, such as mountaintop-removal mining in Central Appalachia and the spread of methamphetamine through rural America. "Too many local newspapers think the world ends at the county line," Cross says.

To that end, the Institute is programming a five-day national conference on rural issues at the Knight Center for Specialized Journalism at the University of Maryland in June 2005. The Institute also has established the Tom and Pat Gish Award, honoring the longtime publishers of *The Mountain Eagle* in Whitesburg, Ky., to recognize rural journalists who demonstrate the courage, tenacity, and integrity often needed to render public service through journalism in rural areas.

The Mountain Eagle is published weekly. The Gishes took over as editors when they purchased the paper in 1957. Exemplifying what the Institute stands for, *The Mountain Eagle* is an independent local newspaper that is not afraid of crusading on issues the editors believe in and still features in-depth coverage of politics, business, and social issues while also covering family reunions, births, and anniversaries.

The Gishes are the first recipients of the award, which the Institute hopes to award annually, depending on the nomination of deserving recipients. "My hope," says Cross, "is that some day we will give that award to a journalist who got into rural journalism or stayed in it because of our Institute." N&T

Meth, Mines, Mad Cow and Migrants

Get signed up for The Rural Blog and you regularly get e-mails with some most unusual subject lines, "Meth, mines, mad cow and migrants" among them.

The subject lines call attention to some top stories of the day posted by the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues and available for reprint — or further individualized reporting.

It's all part of the Institute's effort to call attention to stories that matter. The Rural Blog showcases important issues, trends, events, ideas, and journalism. Interim director Al Cross and staff assistant Bill Griffin scour the wire services and dozens of national and regional media reports to select pieces they think deserve wider attention. They capsulize those in a report that is posted at www.ruraljournalism.org. The goal is five-day-a-week postings.

To keep people looking at the website regularly, the Institute e-mails an advisory that new stories have been posted. The body of the e-mail gives a listing of the headlines and provides a hyperlink to the Blog's latest postings. It's hard to resist clicking to see the stories when the alert promises "Canadian beef, 'cornification,' cigarette taxes and more" or "Free land, tomatoes for tacos and lots more." Think. Cornification, just a mouse click away.

— NPW

On Our Minds

Columns by Dorothy Copus Brush

Award-winning columnist keeps Appalachia's past alive in her 'Random Thoughts.'

Crossville Chronicle

Dorothy Brush displays her award from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. Mrs. Brush, a member of the NSNC since 1995, has been a columnist since 1987.

The nation's 2004 Columnist of the Year provides both historic and personal glimpses in her "Random Thoughts" column published weekly in the *Crossville* (Tenn.) *Chronicle.* She has reflected on her mother's death in September 2000, less than a month after her 97th birthday. She has written about her own wedding and 60-plus-year marriage. Tales of shape-note singers, midwives, and circuit riders have entertained and enlightened her readers. And she's current, as well. A recent column told of an Ohio company supplying washboards for soldiers in Iraq.

Dorothy C. Brush calls her selection by the National Society of Newspaper Columnists, which she joined in 1995, "surprising and unexpected." Mrs. Brush, who is 81, has written for the *Chronicle* since 1987, retiring to the area the year previously.

"Did I say retired?" she jokes. Her column runs each Wednesday and she does occasional feature stories. Mrs. Brush, who learned in 2003 that she has terminal lung cancer, proudly proclaims that she's never missed a deadline.

But she's also a modest woman. In accepting the Columnist of the Year award at the NSNC's annual conference in June 2004, she said she did so as "tribute to the many hundreds of columnists who work faithfully and unheralded."

Mrs. Brush began her writing career after raising three sons and a daughter with her airman husband in the late 1940s and 1950s. In 1964 she took an adult education course taught by "a tough old newspaperman who was a good friend of Harry Caudill." Caudill spoke to the class about his 1963 classic, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands,* a book she recently re-read. "What an introduction to Appalachian history and culture!" she praises.

As for her own praises, her Columnist of the Year plaque reads, "For courage in carrying out your commitment to column writing." The group's president, Mike Leonard of Bloomington, Ind., told Mrs. Brush that her life serves as an inspiration to columnists everywhere. The organization represents more than 400 columnists from the United States and Canada. N&T

—NPW

Circuit riders' history rich and colorful

Circuit riders were an American frontier institution, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica. John Wesley originated the practice in England, and Francis Asbury introduced it here in 1771. However, Robert Strawbridge had been riding circuit in the colonies since 1764. Asbury traveled on horseback for 45 years covering 5,000 miles a year. He preached twice a day during the week and three times on Sunday. There were few church buildings and services were held in cabins, in the open, and even in barrooms.

If a young man showed aptitude for public speaking and the willingness to endure the hardships of sitting in the saddle for weeks over wild country, he would begin as an assistant to a circuit rider before being approved to have his own circuit. All this for $64 a year, which in 1800 was raised to $80.

Crossville was fortunate to count Judge Sam C. Brown as one of its well-respected, distinguished native sons. Because of his skill in reporting past history we have a lasting record of some of those early circuit riders and preachers who ministered to our pioneers on the Plateau.

In 1939 the judge wrote a series of recollections about those hardy men for the Chronicle. He described them as dedicated men who "directed the religious forces in warfare against sin." There were many but space limits me to three of the earliest.

W.B. "Parson" Rush was licensed to preach by the Holston Conference in 1835 and for six years he rode circuit. After he married Catherine Kemmer in 1841 he settled in Grassy Cove. Although he farmed he was not really cut out for that life but he was also a sur-

From the Autobiography of Rev. A.B. Wright. *Cincinnati: Cranston & Curts, 1896. Library Collection, Tennessee State Library and Archives.*

A.B. Wright rode the circuit for half a century in the Appalachian portion of Middle Tennessee.

Can't brush your teeth? Chew on a tree

DOROTHY COPUS BRUSH

Random Thoughts

Few, if any, would argue that teeth aren't important. Certainly not Don Quixote. Cervantes puts these words in his hero's mouth: "Every tooth in a man's head is more valuable to him than a diamond."

Shakespeare, who lived in the same time period as Cervantes, the middle 1500s to the early 1600s, went even further with dental advice. In his play *Coriolanus* he says, "Bid them wash their faces, and keep their teeth clean."

This interest in teeth all began after I read a recent article in the Nashville paper about dental hygiene. The main point of the story was about chew sticks as an alternative to toothbrushes. This ancient version of cleaning teeth has been used for centuries by Africans and people in Middle Eastern and Indian countries.

That information jarred my memory, and after a search through some oral histories of pioneers here on the Cumberland Plateau I found what I thought I had read. "What is the name of the bush used for toothbrushes?" was asked of Irene Bushbaum, a longtime citizen of Cumberland County.

She answered, "Black Gum, that was their toothbrush then. There weren't any bought toothbrushes when I was growin' up. You'd chew the end of a Black Gum twig till it was soft and then use it to brush your teeth with, and use salt and soda."

In writing her book *Gone With the Wind*, Margaret Mitchell labored painstakingly to be sure she had every historical fact right. Her agent questioned her once about a reference to toothbrushes in 1868. Was she sure?

The author answered that indeed she had three references in her notes on the toothbrush, including one from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. She added, "I remember Grandma telling me how the blockade cut off whalebone stays and toothbrushes. They used split oak for the stays and for toothbrushes used a twig (willow twigs were popular) chewed till it frayed into fibers."

Today you can buy chew sticks in health food stores for a little more than a dollar. They even offer them with flavors, cherry, grape, vanilla or strawberry. To use them you chew on the stick until it softens and then use the bristles to brush. No paste is necessary. After brushing, the stick is placed in your toothbrush holder to dry out until next time. The disadvantage is that it takes longer than just picking up a toothbrush which is already softened.

The Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry says of chew sticks, "For thousands of years much of the developing world has been preventing cavities and gum decay by using chewing sticks from the root, stem or twig of local trees and shrubs." Their researchers found that the sticks release antimicrobial agents that kill germs, fungi and viruses that cause bad breath, cavities and gum disease.

The moral of this tale is there is no excuse for not brushing as long as there are trees!

• • •

Dorothy Copus Brush is a Fairfield Glade resident and Crossville Chronicle *staffwriter whose column is published each Wednesday.*

Crossville Chronicle. *Reprinted with permission.*

The breadth of the topics covered by Dorothy Copus Brush can be seen from her columns of May 19, 1999 (top), and March 21, 2001 (above).

veyor and in 1856 he ran the boundary line for Cumberland County.

During the War Between the States, he served as a chaplain in Col. Carter's First Tennessee Confederate Cavalry for a year and then was discharged to return to his family. For more than half a century, Rush served as a local preacher.

Although a lifetime member of the Southern Methodist Church, he was beloved by all denominations. Judge Brown called him the white-haired herald of the cross.

He wrote, "I look on him as a scholar, philosopher and eloquent pulpiteer who was always put upon for Sunday occasions. Although only a local preacher, when it was necessary to fire big artillery the parson was called." The judge added that it was said the parson married more couples and presided over more funerals than any other man in the county.

Rev. Clark Peters' full name was Adam Clark Peters, so named for the author of Clark's Commentaries on the Scriptures, a book which could be found in most every minister's library. He felt the call to preach early, but he was not licensed by the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church until 1872.

Clark was assigned to the Crossville Circuit at age 29 and rode circuit for the next four years. Then he entered Eastern Tennessee Wesleyan University in Athens, completing his education in two years. After graduating in 1878 he returned to spend the next 45 years on the mountain. Although he had a hard circuit he never complained or questioned. The judge said he had strong pulpit qualities and had a good record as a builder of churches.

When Rev. A.B. Wright was assigned the Crossville circuit in 1876 Crossville had no church, but there were two saloons. He had been licensed to preach in the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844, a year before the great separation when Methodist churches in the south broke away from the main body and changed their name to Southern Methodist.

Wright opposed both slavery and the split in the church, but if he was to preach he had to submit to the change.

For half a century he rode circuit in Fentress, Morgan, Roane, Cumberland, portions of Bledsoe, Anderson, Overton, Pickett counties and, in Kentucky, Clinton and Wayne counties. The Crossville circuit had 15 appointments. Wright preached at each one once a month, 12 rounds a year regardless of ice, snow, floods and zero-degree temperatures. As compensation for a nine-month period he was paid $37.50, but Wright said he did not work for money but for the advancement of the Master's Kingdom.

During his many hours on horseback he read, and because he kept careful records he noted he covered 2,051 miles one year on the Crossville circuit and read 4,166 pages of books as well as newspapers and the Bible. He preached 181 times, had 80 conversions, received 105 into membership and visited and prayed with 500 families.

Of the Crossville mission Wright wrote, "As true-hearted Christian people as can be found anywhere in the world and they will make greater sacrifices to attend church than any other people I ever saw."

Mrs. Brush's columns are reprinted with permission. You can see more of her work at www.crossville-chronicle.com. Click on the Opinion link.

During his many hours on horseback A.B. Wright read, and because he kept careful records he noted he covered 2,051 miles one year on the Crossville circuit and read 4,166 pages of books as well as newspapers and the Bible. He preached 181 times, had 80 conversions, received 105 into membership and visited and prayed with 500 families.

From 200 Years of United Methodism: An Illustrated History, Drew University Methodist Library

An early 19th-century engraving of a Methodist circuit rider shows the sometime difficult conditions under which these preachers traveled to their parishoners.

Shop Talk from Rosy's Diner

by Fred Sauceman

It may be 'No Hat, No Service' at Rosy's, but editorial cartoonist Charlie Daniel is never caught without his thinking cap.

Charlie Daniel started drawing cartoons 50 years ago while a student, in 1955, at the University of North Carolina studying political science. He now has four published collections of his works as well as a "Best of" online archive at www.knoxnews.com. He was born and educated in Virginia and moved to Knoxville, Tenn., in 1958 as editorial cartoonist for The Knoxville Journal. *He has been editorial page cartoonist at the* News-Sentinel *since 1992. East Tennessee State University's Reece Museum hosted an exhibit of editorial cartoons by Charlie Daniel in 2003, and Fred Sauceman from ETSU interviewed him about his life's work. These excerpts are from that conversation. The cartoons are all by Charlie Daniel, reprinted with his permission.*

FS: Rosy's Diner is the setting for many of your cartoons. How did the diner come into your mind?

CD: In order to eat in Rosy's Diner you have to have a hat on. "No hat, no service." I picked that up in the Waffle House. I noticed one time they weren't waiting on me, and I was the only one in there without a cap on, and I figured that was the reason.

IRAQIS ARE NOW FREE TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THEIR LEADERS WITHOUT FEAR OF RETALIATION-
ANY OF YOU GUYS GOING TO THE DIXIE CHICKS CONCERT?
ROSY'S DINER
2003 MAY
NO HAT- NO SERVICE
ROSY'S SPECIAL
MENU
daniel@knews.com

One of the characters in your cartoons who always seems to have headgear on is Smidlap. He turns up quite often and you describe him as your alter ego. Tell me about Smidlap and how he looks at the world.

I can't remember when I first started using Smidlap, but I was injecting myself because really it's a caricature of me. I think I started doing him when politicians would complain about me drawing them and the way I was "misdrawing" them. I would say, "Well, look what I do to myself," and so that's how Smidlap came along. Usually in Rosy's Diner he's the guy sitting with his back to the viewer.

... One idea that never got published — Smidlap in the diner. It was right after Tennessee had lost in Atlanta (to Maryland in the 2002 Peach Bowl, 30-3), and Smidlap was sitting in the diner without a cap on. He had a jacket on, and he was telling Rosy that he had gone to this fancy restaurant in Atlanta, and they'd taken his cap away and given him a jacket. I thought that was kind of funny, but the editor didn't run it. I'll submit it again sometime down the road. I use Smidlap to make comments on what's going on in the world.

You mentioned drawing a cartoon and not having it accepted by the newspaper. How much control does the *News-Sentinel* exert over your creativity? Do editors suggest ideas for you to draw cartoons about? Are you in any way restricted as far as subjects go? How does your rela-

tionship with the editorial people at the newspaper actually work day to day?

I've found it works quite well. They do not suggest topics or anything like that. I'm pretty much on my own, and what I do is, I'll wake up about 6 in the morning and NPR news is on my clock radio, and I'll start mulling over what's going on in the world. I'll get up and have my coffee and read the morning paper and start thinking about what I would say if I were in the diner reading this stuff. And so when I get downtown usually I'll start doodling out ideas on topics and I'll do three or four different subjects and gags on those subjects, and then about 2 o'clock I'll go to the editorial page editor and show him the four doodles that I've come up with and he'll say let's run this one.

That's the control they have over me, but in a way I still draw what I want to draw, and if something's really far out that they don't particularly like, he'll just kind of slip that under the bottom of the pile. And if I really like it, I'll submit it again the next day, so I'm pretty happy with the freedom that I have — which cartoonists should have — total freedom. Otherwise they become staff artists.

Do you remember a cartoon or an idea being rejected as too controversial?

No, not really. Editorial cartoons should be, by definition, controversial. They should be politically incorrect.

Let's go back to that daily schedule. Once you figure out, in the middle of the afternoon, what you have to do, what kind of turnaround time are you working against?

An hour and a half to an hour. I try to avoid overdrawing. I grew up copying funny papers and therefore my style is kind of a funny paper style, so I try to keep it as simple as I can. Every now and then I'm guilty of overdrawing, but usually if I spend an hour to an hour and a half on one, I'll redraw it a couple of times.

By 3:30 or 4 I can start worrying about the next day. It's a continual thing. You knock one out and you start worrying about the next day… I do six a week, and the only time I get way ahead is on Friday, when I'll do one for Sunday and for Monday. And then I usually sweat out that Monday one because things change so fast, nowadays. They become dated.

Tell me about the process of creating a caricature of somebody. For some characters the features you exaggerate are fairly obvious. Others might not have especially prominent features. How do you look at someone and decide, in just a few strokes of the pen, how to capture that face so that people will recognize him or her?

It actually takes me weeks and weeks to do that. When I first start out, it'll be almost like a portrait, and slowly it'll evolve into what gets exaggerated. I admire people at Dollywood and on street corners who sit down and draw somebody's caricature in 32 seconds. It takes me two weeks.

Of the public figures in Tennessee we're familiar with, who do you remember struggling over the most to try to recreate in cartoon form?

Right now it's Governor Phil Bredesen I'm struggling over. The easiest one, of course, was Ned Ray McWherter. We dropped the Ray when he got to be governor. He was a wonderful caricature because he was round. And I thought Lamar Alexander had some great features because he had that kind of a hawk nose and a chin that popped out, and so he was pretty easy. And you always put the plaid shirt on him and you didn't have to label him. Everybody knew him from the plaid shirt.

What do you emphasize with Governor Bredesen?

He's got baggy eyes. He's got that sleepy look and baggy eyes. And the nose is kind of upturned. I'm struggling with it. What you try to do is get it down to a few lines, and it takes a while. When Randy Tyree was first elected mayor of Knoxville, I had a hard time with him; by the time he went out of office and ran for governor, I had him down to about four strokes. It was always one of my favorite caricatures, but it took about two years to evolve into something.

Of all the political figures you've drawn over the years, who were the best sports about it and who were the worst?

The worst, statewise, was [former Tennessee Governor] Ray Blanton; the worst nationally was Richard Nixon.

Nixon gave you a hard time?

I went to the Nixon Library in California, and there's not a cartoon in the library by anybody. I went to Johnson's library and there, in the main lobby, is one of my cartoons. Johnson loved cartoonists. Nixon pretended that he did, but we know he had an enemies list, and I assume there were many cartoonists on it. He didn't like ridicule at all. You ridiculed him and he felt you were after him. He had a complex.

ETSU University Relations

Charlie Daniel discusses his cartoon work at the Reece Museum in 2003.

Smidlap: Daniel's alter ego.

"W" is just one of a long line of politicians Daniel has drawn.

And the people in politics who've reacted as the best sports?

Randy Tyree, a former mayor of Knoxville, was a great sport. Victor Ashe, another former mayor of Knoxville, is a great sport about it, and they're great collectors. Statewide, of the senators, Howard Baker was very encouraging. It gets tough to ridicule somebody when they call you up and say, "Boy that was really good. Send me an original if you would."

Let's talk about your beginnings as a cartoonist and what cartoonists you emulated when you were learning the craft.

I was learning the craft and not realizing I was learning the craft. When I was a kid, I had this unnatural love of the comic pages. We called them the funny papers back then. Krazy Kat and Lil' Abner and Dick Tracy. I would just draw them and copy them. In grade school I had a character that was a total ripoff of Dick Tracy that I called Dick Daniel, and I would sit in school and draw these little Dick Daniel strips.

People started calling me Dick Daniel, too, but I had no desire to become a cartoonist. I was going to be a football player and a football coach. I went to Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy, and I discovered, about 1949, a copy of Bill Mauldin's "Up Front." I fell in love with his drawings. Through Bill Mauldin I learned to have a healthy disrespect for authority. I still had no idea of becoming a cartoonist.

I'd gone into the Marines, and came back and was in school at the University of North Carolina, and a friend of mine noticed all these doodles that I kept doing, and he said, "You're a cartoonist," which came as news to me. He drug me kicking and screaming down to *The Daily Tar Heel* to submit some drawings, and they said they would run them and take me on as their political cartoonist. So, that's how I got started. I switched from business to political science because once I saw one published, I was hooked.

"It gets tough to ridicule somebody when they call you up and say, 'Boy that was really good. Send me an original if you would.'"

— Charlie Daniel

Despite that interest in business and the aspiration to become a coach, were you always a rebellious person? Did you always have inside you that tendency to question authority that you must have in this line of work?

No, I was a pussycat. My cartoons kind of surprise me sometimes, that I'm that rebellious. Deep down where it counts, I think I'm a swell guy, a real pussycat.

You not only have to draw, you have to write, because you and you alone create the captions and the dialogue in your cartoons.

Most of the time the caption comes first. I think in terms of words and then draw the pictures around them. I heard somebody once say that a really great cartoon should not have any words or captions or labels, that the picture should carry the whole thing. With me it takes words.

If you were a professor analyzing Charlie Daniel's work, how would you describe his style?

It's simplistic, humorous, to the point, not cluttered.

I view what you do day to day as a dream job. You have a tremendous amount of freedom, and you get to be creative every day. Is that an illusion, or is that really the way it is?

No, that's the way it really is. It's one of those jobs where you enjoy getting up every morning and going to work. You don't dread it. I feel very fortunate, and God has blessed me with a talent. I was like Jonah, refusing to go to Nineveh, but I ended up where I belong and doing what I love to do. It's great fun.

People say do you worry about the pressure. There is pressure in having to come up with something every day, but I thrive on the pressure, and that's part of the joy of doing it. I can't accomplish anything until I have a deadline hanging over me.

I've got a Bloom County strip over my desk at work, and it has Opus when he was doing the comic strip, and he's sitting there at the table saying, "Gee, I just can't come up with anything funny today," and then the editor comes up behind him with an AK47 pointed at him and looking at his watch and saying, "Five minutes to deadline," and Opus is drawing away, saying, "I'm on a roll." That's the way I look at it. N&T

Fred Sauceman is executive assistant to the president of East Tennessee State University.

Journalist and photographer Stephen Marion keeps an eye and a heart on his community, its news, its stories, and its people.

Witness to the Local

by Marianne Worthington

In easy, lengthened tones, Stephen Marion is talking about buttermilk. He has discovered and researched a nearby, private dairy that makes a particularly delicious brand. The dairy's distribution, however, is limited to one little out-of-the-way grocery store in Marion's home place, Jefferson County, Tennessee. He regularly seeks out the buttermilk anyway, fond of the "golden globules" of butter that float atop the milk. Pancakes made with this buttermilk, he claims, are "better than church."

These ruminations on buttermilk exemplify Marion's winning sense of humor and his near obsessive thoroughness with all things local. For over two decades, he has worked as a journalist and photographer for Jefferson County's only newspaper, *The Standard Banner,* and has forged a reputation in the community as a faithful chronicler of local events. Any given issue of the twice-weekly paper reveals Stephen Marion as chief reporter and photographer.

Marion is also an award-winning fiction writer, author of the novel *Hollow Ground,* published by Algonquin Books in 2002. Both *Hollow Ground* and his current novel, in progress, are set in the same East Tennessee County, a fictionalized version of Jefferson County. Nestled within rich valleys and waterways between Knoxville and Morristown, the community — real and fictional — feeds Marion's habits of observation.

"I feel like people are looking at me to make sense of things. I like that idea."– Stephen Marion

"Journalism I do to make a living and to be part of my community," he says. "Fiction I do to satisfy something in my soul, a need I have to try to understand and participate in this bizarre, profane, holy, mess called life. And everything, everything I write about in fiction started from something that I learned while I was working as a journalist or photographer."

Marion grew up in the western end of the county in a small subdivision surrounded by farms and railroad tracks. He loved playing outside, which fostered his fascination with insects, animals, and the natural world. According to his father, as a boy Marion kept a variety of wild creatures in the house, including "a particularly testy little critter," a garter snake that Marion named Henry Kissinger.

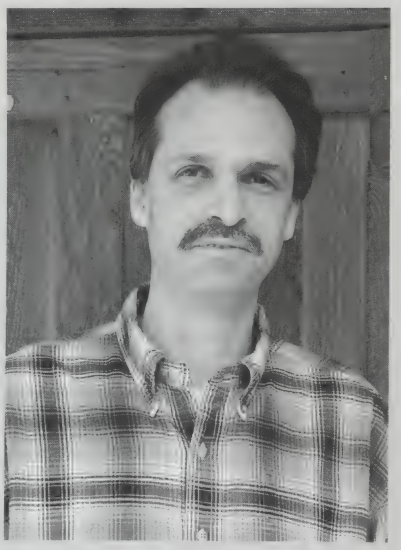
When he was a teen, the family moved to a farm in the

The Facts and the Truth

Stephen Marion sees journalism, photography, and fiction writing as distinct categories requiring different skills, but all three are characterized by what Marion calls his "obligation to be a local witness."

"With journalism, I'm dealing with something finite, or it seems more finite to me. Maybe I'm covering a story about a brother giving his sister a kidney. Though I might think about the implications of that, I don't tend to build elaborate ideas about it. Journalism is a lot like a first draft. Fiction is a different thing. With fiction, you're not so much trying to deal with the *facts* as you are trying to deal with the *truth,* so, you build the facts to represent the truth.

"I find photography very enigmatic. You can look at a picture and see different things. And compared to writing, on a physical level, it takes your mind out of things. You're almost using an athletic sensibility when you take pictures. That's freeing for someone who spends a lot of time wrestling with words. Trying to capture something in a picture frees you up. It feels good."



Jeff Daniel Marion

Stephen Marion

Bear dogs.

Bear driver.

county seat of Dandridge. It is on this same land that Marion and his wife built their house several years ago. Back of the house are the woods Marion roamed in his youth. "This is my place, and I understand things here in ways that I don't understand in other places. It's my wife's place, too, so I think that will keep us here," he says.

Marion began writing fiction and taking pictures during his sophomore year of high school. By the time he was a senior, he was so fond of photography that he thought he would try working as a photojournalist at *The Standard Banner.* The newspaper needed a night reporter, instead. Editor Dale Gentry hired Marion, then age 17, to cover city council and other night-time meetings and gave him a crash course in journalistic writing.

"Dale gave me some of his old textbooks and taught me the basics on how to write a newspaper story, picking out a lead and going from there," Marion says. "I had never done that kind of writing before, and I've never had a journalism course. All my journalism training has been on the job."

Marion entered Carson-Newman College as an English and history major. There he continued to be mentored in reading and writing by his first teacher, his father, Jeff Daniel Marion, faculty member and poet-in-residence at Carson-Newman for over 30 years.

During college, Marion divided his time between reporting and studying. "I worked way too hard in college," he notes. "That's where I turned into a workaholic. I worked at the paper covering night meetings and writing stories, taking pictures all weekend, and studying all the time. I worked seven days a week all through college."

After graduating in 1986, Marion won a scholarship and entered the MFA writing program at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., but still maintained ties to his community and *The Standard Banner,* working there on visits home. ("There was always something for me to do at the paper.") Being a full-time graduate student at Cornell was the first time he had been so far from home for an extended period. "Though it was exciting to meet a lot of new people I had things in common with at Cornell, I was homesick the whole time."

Over the years Marion's work as reporter and photographer has put him in touch with all kinds of people and stories from his community. A decade ago, he wrote about his newspaper work in *Cornell Magazine.* Here's how he described a typical workday:

"I drive a lot. In the snowstorm, searching for someone to photograph sawing a tree off his house. Looking for a lake cove in the summer when the drownings begin. To or from the city council meeting, courthouse, jail, Department of Human Services, nursing home, elementary school. Or I am searching for the house where the bridesmaids' brunch needs a photo, or the

Returning found bank robbery cash.

Meth investigation.

Near Nance's Ferry in a new doublewide.

Martin Luther King Day march.

house where the little girl with leukemia lives, or the house that is afire."

He says he likes the feeling he gets when his neighbors tell him that they need him to tell their stories. "I feel like people are looking at me to make sense of things. I like that idea. I remember as a teenager, driving back from doing a story and just having a feeling — almost like euphoria — that I had this opportunity to see things and describe things for other people. That just thrilled me. Even though I've done it for 20 something years, it still thrills me."

But the responsibility of writing about and living in the same place is daunting as well. Working for a larger or national newspaper can create a totally unbiased viewpoint on the one hand, Marion reasons, but there's also a rootlessness to that kind of journalism. "To live here and work here as a journalist makes me have a heightened sense of responsibility," he says. "I have to live here and face people and things over and over. I better have it right.

"On the negative side, it could make you tend to smooth things over. That's a battle that I fight every day. In journalism in a small town, you have to pick your battles. Otherwise, you'll spend all your time in battles. There is an expectation that the local paper should support the community, but some people don't understand that telling the truth *is* supporting the community, even if the truth is not the most pleasant truth there is to tell."

His experiences as a local resident and journalist informed his novel, *Hollow Ground,* a story he began writing in college and took with him to Cornell. A version of the novel became his master's thesis, for which he was awarded the Arthur Lynn Andrews Prize for Fiction. A portion was also published in *Epoch* and in the 1998 edition of *New Stories From the South.* Before Algonquin published the novel in 2002, Marion received a prestigious National Endowment for the Arts fellowship. But he remains modest and self-effacing about the work.

"I think some of the local people read my novel because they think they're in it or because somebody told them that they were. I was a little bit afraid that people might take offense at something they imagined to be about them, but I didn't have too much trouble."

With an effortless grin, he adds, "Most people were much more interested in what I write about city council than about my novel."

"This is my place, and I understand things here in ways that I don't understand in other places. It's my wife's place, too, so I think that will keep us here."

— Stephen Marion

But when Marion debuted his novel at a reading on the campus of Carson-Newman College, the room was jammed with local people, including the sheriff of Jefferson County, who joked about how the standing-room-only crowd probably violated the local fire laws.

It is these people and this place to which Marion says he is "hopelessly attached." He has no desire to write about any other locale, in his journalism or his fiction. "That's not because I'm close-minded or selfish, it's just that I don't have a depth of understanding about any other place."

As a long-time employee of *The Standard Banner,* Marion now works from home during the first half of the week; the latter part of the week he devotes to fiction writing. He is working to complete his second novel, as yet untitled, by summer's end. Like *Hollow Ground,* it is set in the same county, and at least two characters from the first novel carry over. Again, the inspiration for his fiction has come from his real community, including a scene in a correctional facility where a minister baptizes two prisoners.

"A minister here actually had that kind of ministry in our local jail. He would take sawhorses and put them in a square, put a tarp over them and fill it with water. Then he'd get in it and the prisoner would get in it, and he'd baptize them. That just fascinated me."

Baptisms, bridesmaids' brunches, or buttermilk, if it's happening in his part of the world, Stephen Marion is sure to be watching. And that story or image is sure to show up somewhere in some form for his readers. N&T

Knoxville native Marianne Worthington is a former reviews editor for *Now & Then* and has taught communication studies at Cumberland College in Williamsburg, Ky., since 1990. The community photographs are by Stephen Marion.

Setting the Scene

In Stephen Marion's hometown, the New Jersey Zinc and Asarco Companies have been mining zinc for more than 100 years. As a resident and writer interested in the history of his county, Marion has discovered that more zinc ore is contained beneath Jefferson County, Tenn., than any other place in the United States. As a journalist, Marion once read a police report about two men arrested for climbing 16,000 feet underground in a zinc mine airshaft. These and many other facts merge into fiction and play prominently in Marion's novel, *Hollow Ground*.

The novel opens as 14-year-old Taft DeFaro is riding home to Alexander City with his step-grandfather Moody Myers. Taft knows they are close to home by the smell: "The town sat right on top of the largest zinc deposit in the world, and the mines had tapped it, and the smell came up through the exhaust tower above the highway. The smell always reminded Taft of Moody Myers, because people called the exhaust rig Moody's tower. It was his tower because he had designed it years ago for the mines. To Taft the smell was like the center of a rock, pulled up from the soul of the middle of the earth. When he smelled it, even in his sleep, he knew he was home."

Moody Myers is the unofficial county historian, community archivist, and local museum curator. Moody knows everything, everyone, and every place in his county, and he has made a record of his hunts around the county in a pocket notebook, which Taft now possesses.

In this excerpt, from near the end of the novel, Taft embarks on a wild and dangerous excursion with his wild and dangerous Uncle Tony Carter. Tony is self-destructive — perhaps even mentally unstable — and abusive to his girlfriend Clarice. Taft is afraid of Tony but takes this journey with his uncle because he is more afraid not to and because he does not know what to do about his budding relationship with his neighbor and classmate, Tanya Mayes.

Tony takes Taft to the zinc mines where Tony is an underground miner. Because the miners are on strike and the main entrance is locked, the only way to enter the mine is to climb down the inside of Moody's airshaft tower, a foolish and hazardous descent. Taft relies on the words in Moody's notebook to help him make this journey into this underworld.

— Marianne Worthington

An excerpt from:

Hollow Ground

by Stephen Marion

THE AIR BECAME one sound, vibrating the metal snaps on Taft's blue jean jacket, sucking away the announcer's voice in a whirl of ground-up syllables. What I like, Tony had said, waiting for the race to begin, is when they all let go out of the pole. Talk about a goddamn noise.

Tony had been drinking beer all night. They had stopped at a little market on the road and he did a lot of cutting up with the man who worked there as he bought the beer, but out in the car Tony opened the first one and his hand was trembling. He drank it in a second and then looked at Taft.

Don't ever start, Taft, he said.

When they were back on the highway, Tony had reached down and gotten another beer for himself and handed one to Taft. Taft drank the beer.

It tasted sour and warm.

He had only taken a few sips before he started to feel what the beer was going to do to him. It loosened the wind around him even better. It gave him a vantage point from which he could stand to think about what he had done. What he had done was run off with Tony again. He had run out on his mother and his grandmother. He had run out on Clarice too, whom he loved for no reason the way his grandmother did. He was running with the very man who had hurt them both. Worst of all, Tanya would be looking for him tonight. It was the night she had circled on her calendar in her bedroom, and now Taft had run out on her too. Taft looked at Tony as he drove and sipped his beer. The one thing

He had only taken a few sips before he started to feel what the beer was going to do to him. It loosened the wind around him even better. It gave him a vantage point from which he could stand to think about what he had done.

Taft had never wanted to be was someone who ran out, but there was something else he had not anticipated, something like a current or a tide that kept pulling him farther and farther away.

In the notebook, Taft had read about a dream Moody had. The dream was written up one margin and around the top of a page and then continued on the back.

I knew I was going to have the dream before I had it. I can't say exactly how I knew, but I did. So I stopped. I had been going through some Confederate pension records. I put it off for as long as I could, but then I just went on home to bed and had the dream.

In the stands at the Atomic Speedway Taft felt the notebook, containing Moody's dream, inside his pocket. He and Tony talked to several people. To all of them, Tony had pointed out number 14, Carl Vineyard, who was the one to watch. See, Tony said, he'll line up about eighth on the pole, but it won't take him long. As Vineyard sailed past each lap, Taft glimpsed him through the mesh of tape that served as a window, and there he was, working the steering wheel as if it were clay that might harden any second. Once you see his ass, said Tony, that's all she wrote.

After the race, far later, because Tony and Taft were among the last to leave their seats in the stands, once the dirt oval had fallen quiet, though its red dust kept settling and would keep settling without anyone's knowledge into the morning, Tony eased the Corvette out of the parking lot, which was only a field, its grass flattened and dewy. The grass was wet and pungent as the champagne they spewed on Carl Vineyard, hugging the girl in the swimsuit.

The car seemed to lift off the ground with each new gear. At first the air stung, and then it was so fierce it wanted to shut Taft's eyelids and stop him from breathing. Tony, however, showed no pleasure.

Goddamn, Tony had muttered, with a look of fulfillment, champagne.

Tony didn't let up on the gas when he shifted. He was driving like Carl Vineyard. The car seemed to lift off the ground with each new gear. At first the air stung, and then it was so fierce it wanted to shut Taft's eyelids and stop him from breathing. Tony, however, showed no pleasure. He leaned forward slightly as if he were reading a long, long sentence, and it was this way for miles with no hope of speaking, fence posts zipping past with a sound like shuffling cards. The smell of entering Alexander City was stronger tonight. They flew past the sign TRUCKS! TURN RIGHT 1,400 FEET. AGRICULTURAL LIMESTONE. FAST LOADING! and got to the zinc mines property, and Tony just turned in. It caught the men with strike signs by surprise. At first they just stood up, as if they had been asleep and were certain Tony would stop, but then they all hollered out and one threw a rock. It fell way short, but Taft still ducked. Tony ignored them.

Where are we going? Taft asked.

It seemed like the wrong question.

To work, said Tony.

Taft looked at Tony. Somehow, he wasn't surprised. At the race, the first thing Tony told everybody was that he had been on strike thirty-four days and that if it wasn't for a bunch of son of a bitches he would be going to work about now and he wouldn't be here to see this race. All evening Taft had felt that Tony was restless because he wanted to go to work. He had a beer between his legs but he seemed to have forgotten it. Taft wondered how many he had had. After a certain point with Tony it was like pouring them into a cloud.

Taft had never been inside the mine property before. To the left the bluffs of limestone loomed over them, bigger and steeper than natural hills, and there was iron machination all around, much of it rusted and old. Tony cut onto a narrow road and Taft saw that the sides of the road were lined with stacks of huge black tires which echoed the sound of Tony's engine. Sometimes he could see the tread of them and they were so big he could not imagine what kind of equipment they would fit.

They stopped at a big tin-covered barn with a row of windows in it. It was the changehouse. The windows were lit up and Taft could see rows of coveralls and hip boots still hanging inside. The mill, bigger than the changehouse, was lit up too, and so were all the wires and the steel that connected to the headrig tower. Up this close the sound of Moody's tower was loud. It was the same sound Taft heard in the air at night when he woke up, but fully realized. Tony was already out and trying to open the door to the changehouse but it was padlocked. He only beat on the door for a second and then he quit. Taft just watched him. People always said of Tony that he sure was a good worker. They said it as if they were trying to find something good to say about him despite his problems. Tony was always on time for work. He never missed a day. Tony's life, Taft saw, was like a machine. He knew exactly when to drink and how much to drink so that he could have his drinking and still be sober for work. He kept himself clean and he kept his hair cut to a certain short length. He knew exactly what it took to keep the machine running.

Lights were moving up the road, so he called out Tony's name, but Tony ignored him. After a minute he walked back to the car and stood over it, thinking.

Don't worry, Taft, he said. I know another way in.

He had found something that looked like a belt with a battery on it and a little lamp with a clip. Tony fiddled with it until it came on. The lamp was bright.

You don't have to go to work, Taft said. We're on vacation.

Tony got back in the car, which he had left running.

Vacation's over, he said. Taft could see that his face had

turned red. Then they shot off again down a gravel road full of potholes. Tony tried to dodge them, but sometimes they would catch one and the car would bottom so fast Taft felt as if he might be thrown out. The gravel road went past the headframe, which hovered above them on huge iron legs, and they passed a square hole in the hillside from which steam was boiling, and went on into the piney woods. They drove a long ways, the road turning back on itself and twisting in and going almost straight up and though it was the woods it didn't feel like the woods. Tony shut off the engine and pulled the car over. Taft half expected to hear people behind them, but there was nothing, absolutely nothing, except the whir of Moody's tower, louder than ever. Taft saw that they were exactly at the base of the tower. It stood on huge metal legs too, like the headframe, but toward the top it was rounded like a metal rocket. Air gushed out of the top with enough force to vibrate the ground. All of a sudden the tower started clicking and went quiet.

Tony had his light on. He had strapped the belt around his waist and the light was clipped to his shoulder. His movements were frantic, as if bugs were crawling on him.

Come on, Taft, he said. I want to show you something.

What, said Taft. He didn't make it a question.

Come on, Taft, goddamn it.

A ladder went up the side of the tower and Tony was already ten feet off the ground. Taft looked up at him. Tony's light swept over the side of the tower, which was beaded with sparkly dew, and then rambled through the pines below him. It fixed on Taft.

Tony shut off the engine and pulled the car over. Taft half expected to hear people behind them, but there was nothing, absolutely nothing, except the whir of Moody's tower, louder than ever. Taft saw that they were exactly at the base of the tower. Air gushed out of the top with enough force to vibrate the ground. All of a sudden the tower started clicking and went quiet.

Goddamn it, come on, Tony said. He was hollering.

Taft felt the way Moody had about his dream. He started up the ladder. Maybe he could talk Tony into coming down. The tower seemed to sway but maybe it was only the tops of the pines. They were moving in a wind that could not be detected from the ground. Taft realized he was trembling, but Tony would turn around every few seconds and his light would cover him.

Come on, said Tony. We got to get in before the fan starts up.

They reached a catwalk and the catwalk went around to an opening in the side of the tower. Another ladder came up over the lip. Taft gripped the railings so hard his hands hurt. Tony pointed his light down and it revealed a fan blade the likes of which Taft had never seen. There were three huge blades around a central knob the size of a car engine. Tony was already descending the ladder toward the fan. Taft went over and put his hand on the ladder, which was cold, and Tony looked up at him. His look was almost kind and encouraging.

You can come on, he said. Taft.

Taft was afraid. Tony's light was moving around in a tunnel about as wide as a creek, and that seemed to go down forever. It breathed up a rocky oily smell. Even though Tony was drunk, Taft didn't want him to know he was afraid. The hardest thing was getting turned around so he could go down the ladder. It felt like dropping his legs off the edge of the world. But it didn't take long to get to the fan, which sat in the tunnel like a giant metal spider. Tony had already gotten below it. One blade was close enough to touch, but Taft didn't touch it. He moved down the ladder so quickly he almost stepped on Tony's hands.

Whoa, Tony said. Hold on. He seemed happy now. We'll get there.

The hole was much wider than a well yet the deeper they went the narrower it felt. Tony laughed. It aint going to come on, he said. It makes a noise before it comes on. I've heard it a many a time. But then he added, That thing would cut a man in half.

Below the fan a big cartridge dangled on a chain.

That is the torpedo, said Tony.

The what?

You can ride up and down in it. If something happens, you can.

A cable dangled from the torpedo. As they moved down, a cowl slid over the circle of night sky at the top like an eclipse and then there was nothing except Tony's bubble of light and the rock sides and the metal ladder. Tony's mood was getting better and better. He got almost talkative.

I swear there is something about being underground that makes you crave it, he said. I mean, there is a lot about it to hate, but you get used to it.

As they went deeper the air began to feel colder to him, and the ladder was wetter and wetter and at times it was missing a rung. Usually Tony warned him. He would say a foot was missing, but sometimes he forgot and Taft's foot went down into nothing and it stung all through his body.

Hear that? said Tony.

What?

Tony stopped. Taft didn't want to stop. He wanted to get to the bottom and stand in a solid place. Listen, Tony said.

Taft listened. All he heard was Tony's voice still inside the narrow rock tunnel around them, so close it seemed as if it had come from inside him, but in a second he did hear another sound. It was water. Not a drip or even a small stream, but a huge pounding sound of water, soft because it was so distant.

That is the sump, said Tony, as if he couldn't believe it himself.

The sump? said Taft.

It's at the bottom of the mine. You never can hear it when you're working, because everything is so loud. But you can right now. Listen. It's peaceful enough to hear it.

How big is it? said Taft.

Big. Like a waterfall.

They went on. Taft wished he had never heard the sump. If it was big, like Tony said, it was very, very far away and they were very, very far from the bottom. Of course, the air shaft might stop in an upper portion of the mines. They might be coming close to the bottom of the ladder even now. But he didn't think so.

Tony stopped. Taft felt his weight shifting around.

Wait, he said.

Taft hung on. What is it? he said.

I aint got no feet.

No feet?

The ladder shifted.

Maybe we're at the bottom, Taft said hopefully.

We aint at no bottom, said Tony. You wait.

The metal handgrips gave a flip, a little like the ladder to the high dive at the city pool when somebody jumps off. In a second the ladder thumped again with a crash sound that made his heart sail higher in his chest than he had ever felt and Tony's light was gone. Taft gave something like a whimper and held on tighter. His face was against the metal. For a few seconds there was something, some old vision or stored up light, left in his eyes, but then it was dark. It wasn't just regular dark. It was dark that swallowed you whole instantly. It took away your body and your mind.

A blazing numbness circulated through him like blood. For what seemed like whole minutes at a time, he thought he was falling, flying through the air toward the bottom of the mine. Not just the tunnel but the earth, the planet they were on in space, was tilting. Taft knew all he had to do was release, and the axis would suck him away.

Tony was out of breath. Well, goddamn it, he said, mildly irritated. I must of busted my light.

Taft heard Tony fiddling with the light. The sounds were too loud, as if someone had turned the volume way up, and he felt himself freeze. A blazing numbness circulated through him like blood. For what seemed like whole minutes at a time, he thought he was falling, flying through the air toward the bottom of the mine. Not just the tunnel but the earth, the planet they were on in space, was tilting. Taft knew all he had to do was release, and the axis would suck him away. He began to feel as if maybe his mind had split off from his body, as it might just before a person died.

As he dangled, Moody began to speak to him through the notebook.

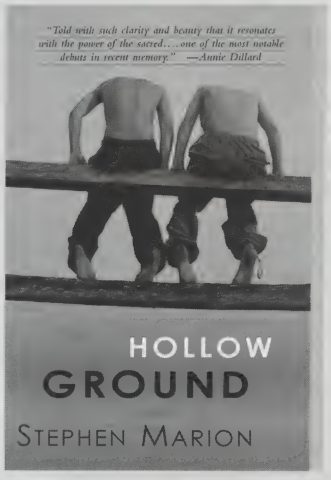
Release, Moody said. *Release, Taft.*

Taft felt the notebook vibrate a little on his thigh with Moody's voice.

I dreamed I was working. I was writing note cards for the whole collection. They were all new note cards and I was writing them in a new language. I was so proud of the new language because I had made it all up and it was the first language that was ever true and accurate. I wrote as quickly as the shadows of clouds move over the mountains, but I wrote so quickly I began not to understand. I began not to know what I had just written and then I failed to know even what I had written before that or what I had written at the very first. And then I realized the language was not mine but that of the objects and they all began to move around me and torment me in their language. I knew then what was in the way, what was in the way all along. I knew what I had to do with myself.

Any second his hands might do what Moody wanted. They might release their grip. Tony was still messing with his light. It flickered and the flicker was stronger than lightning. N&T

From *HOLLOW GROUND* by Stephen Marion. © 2002 by Stephen Marion. Reprinted by permission of Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

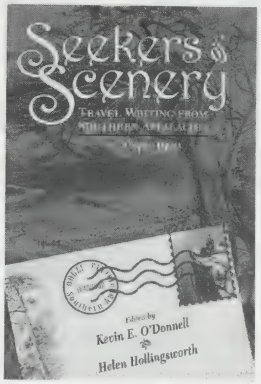

"Told with such clarity and beauty that it resonates with the power of the sacred.... one of the most notable debuts in recent memory." —Annie Dillard
HOLLOW
GROUND
STEPHEN MARION

Hollow Ground
by Stephen Marion
Algonquin Books
Chapel Hill, N.C. - 2002
$23.95 (hardcover), 320 pages
Picador USA
New York, N.Y. - 2003
$14 (paperback), 320 pages

Reviews

Seekers of Scenery: Travel Writing from Southern Appalachia, 1840-1900

edited by Kevin E. O'Donnell and Helen Hollingsworth
University of Tennessee Press
Knoxville, Tenn. - 2004
$42 (hardcover), 385 pages



For readers interested in the "now" and "then" of Appalachia, this travel writing anthology is just the ticket. *Seekers of Scenery* offers a glimpse of 19th-century southern Appalachian people and places along with an overlay of information about 20th-century place names and roads. If so inclined, it is possible to read one of these travel accounts and then journey along a similar route laid out in one of the modern area maps included in the collection.

Lest the reader become too complacent with the early day accounts, though, editorial comments remind us that travel literature is composed of (some) facts filtered through imagination. Herein lies the beauty of this collection: It engages us with an intriguing people (Southern mountaineers) and a sublime, beautiful, picturesque place (the Mountain South) while at the same time teaching us about a peculiar people (travel writers) and a literary place (the travel narrative) — all within the context of the rise of literary magazines, mass-produced images, and the internal economic, social, and cultural colonization of the region.

A pleasure for the general reader and valuable to the scholar, *Seekers of Scenery* accomplishes this difficult task of broad appeal through its astute selection of primary material and its masterful editorial contextualization. This anthology springs from a collection of printed travel writing about Southern Appalachia compiled by Helen Hollingsworth, professor emeritus at East Tennessee State University. Working with her initial research, Kevin O'Donnell, also an ETSU professor, winnowed the material, added a comprehensive, scholarly introduction, headnotes that set up each selection, and a short essay advising modern-day travelers.

The anthology is divided into four sections focusing, roughly, on the mountainous area of north Georgia; the region around Asheville, N.C.; various "backwoods" places of Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina; and the highest peaks east of the Mississippi River, in North Carolina. Thematically as well as geographically grouped, the 18 reprinted pieces address issues such as tourism development, artistic representation (both from the writer's pen and the sketch artist's pencil), scientific exploration, and the social, economic and religious "uplift" movement. Embedded within the pieces, but teased out by O'Donnell, are insights into the development of literacy, journalism by women, and the mass-produced image.

All pieces are in the travel narrative genre, but there is variety among them. Some are fictionalized accounts of trips the authors took and read like short stories. Others are literary "reports" from the region, all intended to introduce the middle-class reader (particularly the Northern reader) to a strange land and a peculiar people. There are also pieces by well-known figures of 19th-century letters, among them Constance Fenimore Woolson, Rebecca Harding Davis, Charles Dudley Warner, and W. E. B. Dubois.

Davis, for example, proves astute in her assessment of a certain kind of travel writer, just as she is unusually sensitive for her era to the plight of the industrialized poor in her short novel *Life in the Iron Mills* (1861). Davis provides a telling portrait of "Miss Cook," a Northern literary lady mining for interesting facts about the Southern mountains for an article she will write. After a morning spent collecting images of Asheville, Miss Cook prepares to leave the region. An acquaintance expresses surprise that her investigation could have been completed so quickly: "Miss Cook laughed with cool superiority: 'Why child, I have [the facts] all now — got them this morning. Oh, I can evolve the whole state of society from half a dozen items. I have the faculty of generalizing, you see … I've done the mountains and the mountaineers. Between slavery and want of railroads, humanity has reached its extremest conditions here. I should not learn that fact any better if I stayed a week.'"

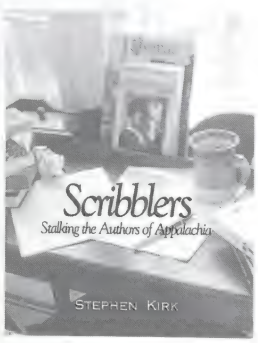
O'Donnell notes this passage as a significant one for its frankness about representation. It serves as a stark reminder that everything we read in this volume is mediated, and it's a poignant lesson that generalizations can take on a life of their own — then *and* now.

— Katherine Ledford

Katherine Ledford teaches literature to non-traditional students for Gardner-Webb University. Her Ph.D. is in American literature from the University of Kentucky and her dissertation focused on travel writing in Appalachia.

Scribblers: Stalking the Authors of Appalachia

by Stephen Kirk
John F. Blair
Winston-Salem, N.C. - 2004
$21.95 (hardcover), 240 pages



In *Scribblers: Stalking the Authors of Appalachia,* Stephen Kirk sets out on a literal and intellectual journey to Asheville, N.C., and its surrounding suburbs, to "glean insights from the lives of famous authors in a town with a rich literary tradition, and to examine the writer's urge as manifested in flesh-and-blood scribblers, whether they be great or humble, successful or failed, recognized or frustrated."

Describing Asheville as "a spiritual center since the time of the Cherokees" with 24 vortexes (places of high energy) between Black Mountain, to the east, and Waynesville, to the west, Kirk opens by suggesting that the place itself creates writers. Renowned authors who have lived and worked in the area include homas Wolfe, Asheville's favorite son; famous short story expert O. Henry; F. Scott Fitzgerald and his troubled wife,

Zelda; Gail Godwin; Charles Frazier, whose *Cold Mountain* setting is 40 miles west; John Ehle; Fred Chappell; Robert Morgan of *Gap Creek* fame; and Patricia Cornwell.

From interviewing and/or researching his literary subjects, Kirk imparts insight into the varied motivations driving Appalachia's most prominent wordsmiths. He does so by using tricks similar to Appalachia's storytellers — distinct description, humor and wit, and anecdotal sidebars that allow the listener/reader to digest a message rather than swallow it whole. From these, we learn that Sharyn McCrumb strives to be an advocate for the region; Fred Chappell enjoys the intellectual challenges of his profession; Robert Morgan craves immortality; Jan Karon heeds a call and vision; and Joan Medlicott responds to channeling experiences.

Attending the local Asheville writers' group meetings for a number of months, Kirk also discovers the common traits of flesh-and-blood scribblers, purported to be his "tribe": the compulsion to share a story, a desire to impact the world in a positive way, a love affair with books, a tendency to face-it-all-alone, and a craving for attention. Alternatively, he also uncovers universal frustrations: time restraints, a hatred of mainstream publishing, and a certain jealousy toward those authors who have made it before living through decades of sweat and toil.

Kirk also speaks as to the tribe's tenacity: "They'll keep attending conferences, exchanging manuscripts, corresponding with kindred spirits, entering contests, subscribing to writers' magazines, introducing themselves to booksellers, hobnobbing with insiders, reading the classics, researching the market, looking for an angle, practicing their craft, submitting their work, and consoling each other as long as they draw breath."

As Kirk's full-time occupation is that of chief editor with the prominent Winston-Salem publishing house that published *Scribblers,* he offers, through humorous, everyday tales a snapshot of the other side of the coin. Whereas writers see an editor's rejection and snubbing as arrogant and unfair, editors view themselves as a "dumping ground for bad prose." Whereas authors view editors' decisions as random or based on favoritism, editors wish simply to become "players in an industry of ideas."

Finally, Kirk also adds anecdotes regarding the self-publishing ventures of various writers encountered on his journey: Eileen Johnson traces her roots to Ireland, writing *More Than Blarney: The Irish Influence in Appalachia,* hiring a self-publishing firm in Nebraska, creating her own imprint and selling enough books to finance another work and a "couple more trips to Ireland." Jack Pyle thereafter releases *The Death of Adam Stone* under Johnson's imprint. And, Steve Brown, a "hero for the downtrodden unpublished," puts out six novels and sells 12,000 copies in a span of 18 months. As Kirk interjects, if writers struggle to successfully market their wares, "why shouldn't they have a place at the banquet?"

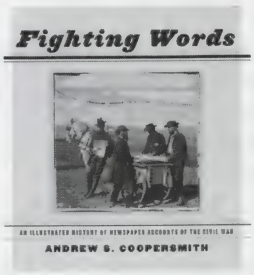
Indeed, in *Scribblers,* Kirk invites the reader to a type of wordsmiths' banquet, presenting a cornucopia of stories, messages, ideas, and reality checks for would-be authors, editors, biographers and all others interested in the written word, Appalachian-based or otherwise. Through his own creative endeavors, Kirk bestows, both for himself and fellow authors, "a pep talk about how artistry is less a divine gift for a chosen few than it is a possibility for ordinary people who would only exercise diligence ... a promise for each of us."

— Reneé Critcher

Reneé Critcher, a native of Watauga County, N.C., is an academic librarian at Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute. She has published poems, personal essays and interviews, attends the Appalachian Writers' Workshop in Hindman, Ky., each year and is a North Carolina State Fair clogging champion.

Fighting Words: An Illustrated History of Newspaper Accounts of the Civil War

by Andrew S. Coopersmith
The New Press
New York - 2004
$35 (hardcover), 325 pages



Andrew S. Coopersmith's *Fighting Words* adds further proof to the adage the pen is mightier than the sword. The book's fundamental premise suggests that Civil War-era newspapers directly influenced public opinion in a manner clearly premeditated and highly political. The author contends that the American Civil War was a war of public opinion influenced by and waged within Northern and Southern newspapers.

Overall, Coopersmith succeeds in presenting a substantial amount of evidence that these newspapers did indeed attempt to mold public opinion. The book unfortunately lacks any source materials that would directly connect individuals' thoughts about the war with their reading of a newspaper. This, however, is not a criticism so much as a limitation that confronts all historians who examine the media's impact upon their audiences.

Fighting Words does document the media's relationship to public opinion in a chronological style that allows for the narrative to slow at times so that Coopersmith can delve into various "important episodes in ... military, social, ideological, and political history." The book's primary sources include more than 80 Civil War-era newspapers from which the author has read about 1,000 editorials and articles. This extensive array of newspapers provides a wide geographic scope, and Coopersmith frequently quotes large portions of various newspaper articles, significantly enhancing the prose and advancing his central arguments.

Fighting Words, with six different sections and 16 chapters, begins with a discussion of newspaper accounts on the firing on Fort Sumter and concludes with an overview of articles written during Reconstruction. Surprisingly, and to the author's credit, *Fighting Words* contains much information pertaining to matters of religion and faith. Several of the newspapers Coopersmith consulted were published by religious denominations such as Alabama's *South-Western Baptist* and New York's *Evangelist.*

Reviews

Coopersmith's portrayal of Southern newspaper editors following the devastating Confederate defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg is particularly impressive. In an effort to bolster morale, these editors, through their editorials, helped reinforce the message to their readers that God had not abandoned the Southern cause. The editors frequently used Biblical text and metaphors to enhance their editorials and to lend an aura of providential authority that certainly aided in shaping popular opinion.

In addition to its persistent religious undertones, the book also gives readers an excellent analysis of public response to numerous critical war and peacetime events and issues, such as the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, the Emancipation Proclamation, the recruitment of African American soldiers, and secession.

While academic audiences might find many of the book's ideas familiar, Coopersmith obviously wrote *Fighting Words* to appeal to a much wider audience than professional historians. The book's numerous illustrations significantly enhance the reader's experience. Each page contains two divided columns that resemble the pages of a Civil War-era newspaper. Coopersmith never assumes that his audience has prior knowledge about the war and, therefore, presents a narrative filled with enlivened details that captures the war from beginning to end.

Overall, *Fighting Words* is an excellent read that provides an avalanche of material that thoroughly supports the author's central arguments. Coopersmith, however, does not go into great detail about who many of these newspaper editors were or about the inner workings of a Civil War-era newspaper. Also, the link between what newspaper editors wrote and what their readers absorbed seems unclear.

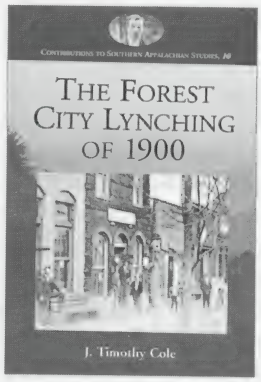
Coopersmith appears to assume that newspaper readers wholeheartedly bought into what these editorials said. The book provides a greater accounting of the newspaper editors and their opinions than an analysis of the average southern or northern citizen/reader. These criticisms aside, *Fighting Words* is well worth reading, and Coopersmith should be commended for his superb research.

—Keith S. Hebert

Keith Hebert is currently enrolled at Auburn University where he is completing his doctoral dissertation on Civil War-era Bartow County, Ga., with the supervision of Kenneth W. Noe.

The Forest City Lynching of 1900: Populism, Racism and White Supremacy in Rutherford County, North Carolina

by J. Timothy Cole
McFarland & Company, Inc.
Jefferson, N.C. - 2003
$30 (paperback), 195 pages



This short book (87 pages of text, followed by seven appendices, copious notes, bibliography and index) takes on two important subjects. First, it is a study of the agrarian/populist movement in North Carolina in the latter part of the 19th century and the resulting formation of the "Fusion Party," which, for a brief time, revolutionized politics and culture in the state and region. Secondly, it is an exploration of family, specifically the Flack family, and the killing in 1900 of the author's great-great grandfather, Mills Higgins Flack, whose death resulted in the lynching of his killer, Avery Mills, a tenant farmer on Flack's farm in Rutherford County.

The author, J. Timothy Cole, approaches these events and the political and cultural worlds that spawned them both as objective historian and family member hoping to piece together hidden or forgotten parts of his heritage. He is ultimately more successful at the first than the second. Despite the emphasis indicated by the title, the lynching of Avery Mills seems almost secondary to the events that conspired to make it happen.

The rage of lynchings of black men and women, largely in the southern states, that astonished and horrified the country primarily during the 1880s and 1890s and again in the 1920s and 1930s, has been the focus of numerous studies and investigations in recent years. Perhaps it takes several generations to gain the necessary distance needed to absorb a people's capacity for barbarity, especially if those people are our own ancestors. For many of us who came of age in the South during the second half of the 20th century, the idea of racial lynchings often seemed improbable, exaggerated, an inverse of the nostalgic antebellum romanticism that likewise strained our credulity.

Yet the facts are there, and Cole's story is one of many that force us to confront the reality of our past. What Cole astutely recognizes, however, is that these outrages have to be placed within a larger historical and cultural setting; otherwise, they are so inexplicable, so atrocious, so outright carnivalesque and *weird,* that they become what Jacquelyn Dowd Hall has called "folk pornography" rather than acts of which we, today, might be capable given the right circumstances (as, indeed, our present age of terrorism and paranoia makes all too clear).

Thus, Cole devotes his first two chapters to explaining the aftermath of the Civil War and the establishment of the New South. In a "Fusion Era" of political compromise and accommodations that were an extension of the Grange Movement, independent farmers and landowners, exasperated by the failure of the Democratic Party to consider the effects of agricultural decline, joined forces with the despised Republican Party to force traditional Democrats out of office. This strong reform movement resulted in alliances between whites and blacks, who were more often allied with the Republicans, and for a short time at the end of the 19th century, the farmers' revolt was successful.

Mills Higgins Flack was a Rutherford County Populist who was elected to the North Carolina legislature for one term as a representative of the movement. But the Democratic backlash took the form of rampant racism, sensationalizing white fears of black rule, and the Fusion experiment quickly ended. Flack seems to have

been an undistinguished politician, and upon his return to private life, he again took up the life of beleaguered farmer. His death at the hands of Avery Mills, a black sharecropper on his land, and Mills' subsequent murder by a crowd most likely including several of Flack's sons, ended the promise of racial cooperation offered by the Fusion.

The last third of Cole's text describes these two deaths, the confusion over what might actually have happened and the aftermath, both in this section of western North Carolina and within the Flack family itself. After such an impressive buildup, one wishes that this part of the book were stronger. The circumstances of the confrontation are trivial — an argument over ownership of peaches — and the racial complications are never fully explored.

This is not necessarily Cole's fault, for the accounts he works with are rather limited. As he points out, "not a single County paper [for Rutherfordton or Forest City] survives for the year 1900." He does have the accounts offered by the unidentified Rutherford County correspondent for the Charlotte *Daily Observer,* but the more complete local view and analysis that would surely have been available in these other papers is absent.

Cole wonders about but doesn't explore the circumstances for the missing documents and in an attempt to compensate occasionally "recreates" or "conjectures" short scenes, complete with dialogue. These parts of the book are awkward and melodramatic, especially in contrast with the innate historical drama of the first chapters. It is clear that Cole struggles deeply with racial and family guilt, the "sins of the fathers," as he puts it in his conclusion. One wishes he had struggled a bit more. Stories seem untold here, and it seems that the family saga still needs to be investigated. Then the book might have the balance it now lacks as well as a more satisfactory conclusion.

— Edwin T. Arnold

Edwin Arnold is professor of English at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C. His most recent work is a study of Erskine Caldwell's participation in the anti-lynching movement of the 1930s and an investigation of the events surrounding the Palmetto massacre, the burning at the stake of Sam Ho and the hanging of Lige Strickland in 1899.

CENTER FOR Appalachian STUDIES AND SERVICES
ETSU

News from the Center

Archives of Appalachia

Today, with cable and satellite television, Bruce Springsteen's lament, "57 channels and nothing's on," strikes a chord with most of us. And as we move from place to place, there is a "sameness" about what we see when we turn on the TV. While the channel choices of the past were limited, their local programming captured the essence of the community and of the people living in it. We look at old film or video footage of a local television program or a local newscast and are thankful that someone saved it.

The **Archives of Appalachia** is making a concerted effort to collect and preserve local television programming in East Tennessee. We are interested in the papers and photographs that document the history of the television stations and the individuals who worked there. We also are eager to collect footage of early programming including early gospel and country music programs, local news broadcasts, special interest stories, and local children's programs.

In the last two years, the Archives has benefited from support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences to preserve the surviving footage of two local television programs seen in Southern Appalachia: the *Virgil Q. Wacks Variety Hour* and the *Jim Walters Home Jubilee* featuring Bonnie Lou and Buster Moore.

Wacks sold commercials and produced his own variety hour program that aired in East Tennessee and southwestern Virginia for 25 years. He took his camera everywhere and captured rare footage of area businesses, community events and festivals, tourist attractions, and sporting events. Because of his work, the Archive has more than 1,700 reels of film documenting life in these communities.

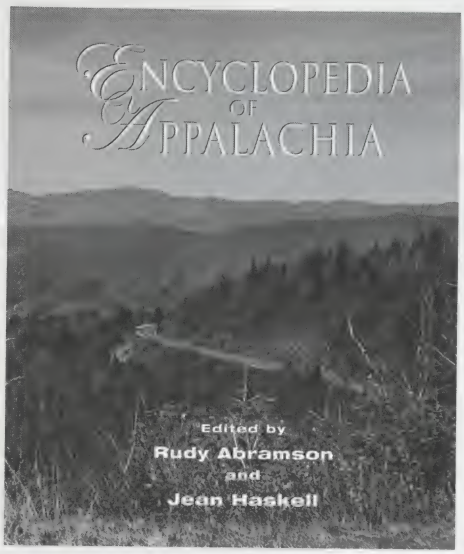
The Bonnie Lou and Buster Moore Collection includes 40 two-inch quad video recordings of their country music program, the *Jim Walters Home Jubilee.* Mrs. Moore says the program would have been the first country music television program in the region if the TV tower atop the mountain hadn't fallen a week before the first scheduled broadcast. The programs that Mrs. Moore saved feature talented bluegrass and country music performers and country music comedy routines that pre-date *Hee-Haw.*

The Archives also includes the Broadside Television Records, featuring special documentaries, and the WSJK-TV Collection with local series for public television, and has four additional collections to process and preserve. Footage from many of these was featured in the Archives' recent film series celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services.

— Norma Myers, Director

Bonnie Lou and Buster Moore Collection, Archives of Appalachia, ETSU

Buster and Bonnie Lou Moore, shown in a promotional shot for their television, radio, and recording endeavors, are featured as part of the film series for the Center's 20th-anniversary celebration, produced by the Archives of Appalachia.



University of Tennessee Press

Proposed cover for the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia,* due out from University of Tennessee Press in early 2006.

Encyclopedia of Appalachia Project

It has often been noted that more things are known about Appalachia that are *not* true than of any other region of the United States. Since the mid-19th century, when journalists and travel writers first took a collective interest in the region, the news media have been the main means by which Appalachian stereotypes have spread and persisted.

The Encyclopedia of Appalachia, due out in early 2006 from University of Tennessee Press, draws on the expert knowledge of more than 1,500 contributors from fields as varied as medicine, history, sociology, ecology, business and technology, folklore, linguistics, music, education, and religion to provide a comprehensive portrait of the region, its people, and its culture.

Intended as a practical reference book, *The Encyclopedia,* a dozen years in the making, is a repository of information on nearly every aspect of the region and should prove a valuable resource for journalists, as well as casual students and serious scholars. By consulting its pages when covering Appalachia-related stories, journalists can avoid perpetuating historic falsehoods and stereotypes of the region. In addition, information in *The Encyclopedia of Appalachia* can help determine the newsworthiness of a story by corroborating or contradicting the journalist's preconceptions; providing background, history, and context for contemporary Appalachian issues; and identifying further reading for more in-depth coverage, as well as writers and scholars who can serve as sources to elaborate on specific topics.

These experts and a team headed by co-editors Jean Haskell and Rudy Abramson and managing editor Jill Oxendine have worked tirelessly to be sure the 2,000-page-plus *Encyclopedia* is accurate in its facts, figures, and details and relates topics to one another to provide a "larger picture."

— Troy Gowen, Deputy Managing Editor

Bluegrass, Old Time, and Country Music Program

Students from the **ETSU Bluegrass, Old Time, and Country Music Program** recently toured England and Scotland to promote the Southern Appalachian region. Their concert performances during this 12-day tour provided support, on behalf of this region's business community, for efforts to attract tourists from the United Kingdom to Appalachia.

ETSU University Relations

A Scottish bluegrass fan talks with Daniel Boner, Aaron Jackson, and Jessica Ball at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre in Glasgow during their promotional tour in January.

The ETSU Bluegrass Band tour members were Aaron Jackson of Quitman, Texas, on mandolin and guitar; Jessica Ball of Rogersville on fiddle; and Daniel Boner of Bridgeton, N.J., on guitar, fiddle, and banjo. Both Jackson and Boner are heard with other ETSU bluegrass students on the CD album *Appalachian Shamisen,* which features the bluegrass talents of Takeharu Kunimoto, who was an ETSU Visiting Bluegrass Scholar in 2004. The album, released on the center's Now & Then label, is available at the CASS office in 209 Warf-Pickel Hall.

The ETSU group presented a series of six concerts at major holiday and travel shows in Manchester, England, and Glasgow, Scotland. They also conducted a workshop for students at the Royal Scottish Academy in Glasgow, which was arranged by Dr. Joseph Sobol, director of ETSU's Storytelling program. The tour was initiated through an invitation from MountainSouth USA, in consultation with the Johnson City/Jonesborough/ Washington County Chamber of Commerce.

— Jack Tottle, Director

Reece Museum

The exhibit and acquisition areas of the **Reece Museum** have been quite active in the past months with displays and gifts from regional and national artists, lenders, and donors. The costume collection has received significant additions of period pieces from a long-time supporter of the museum. This collection is regularly utilized as teaching aids for students in fashion fundamentals courses at ETSU as well as theater students wishing to learn more on the proper care and storage of clothing materials.

The exhibits schedule has included "Reflections of Environment and Form," a collection of contemporary clay works by four national artists later showcased in Baltimore as part of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts annual gathering; the kickoff for a state-

Courtesy of G. Carol Bomer

Asheville, N.C., artist G. Carol Bomer stands with her mixed-media piece, "Global City Babel/Foundation," winner of the 2004 First Tennessee Bank Show. The painting will be part of an exhibit, "Art and Faith in the 21st Century," at The Gallery in New York City opening in July.

wide traveling exhibit of artwork from the collections of the Tennessee State Museum in Nashville; and a retrospective of paintings and drawings by Joseph Delaney, a Knoxville native who spent most of his adult life living and working in New York and returned "home" in his later years as artist-in-residence at the University of Tennessee.

Next up for the museum is the annual regional competition, the First Tennessee Bank Show, April 21-May 20. In its 27th year, this competition is co-sponsored by First Tennessee Bank, the Johnson City Area Arts Council, and the Reece Museum. It is open to residents of Tennessee and other artists living within a 200-mile radius of Johnson City. The juried show drew 350 entries last year, with only 82 works selected for showing. The "Bank Show" annually provides an opportunity to see some of the best art being produced in the region.

—Museum Staff

Appalachian, Scottish, and Irish Studies

The **Appalachian, Scottish, and Irish Studies Program** (ASIS) will return to Scotland this summer as 15 undergraduate and graduate students spend three weeks studying at the University of Edinburgh's School of Celtic and Scottish Studies.

The focus of the program, sponsored by CASS, will be Scottish culture and its relationship to Appalachian culture. Daily activities will include lectures in Scottish folk culture, music, oral narrative, history, beliefs, and literature and performances by internationally renown storytellers and musicians such as Duncan Williamson and Jack Beck. There will be field trips to the Highlands, the Island of Arran, Glasgow, the common riding at Selkirk, and the Scottish Fisheries Museum. Participants will have a chance to go to other cultural events and to experience Edinburgh's vibrant city life.

Of special interest will be the chance to meet with Dr. Celeste Ray, author of *Highland Heritage: Scottish Americans in the American South.* Participants will also utilize the School of Scottish Studies Archives and meet Scottish people while conducting their research projects. ETSU has been taking students to Scotland since 1988, when English professor Tom Burton founded the ASIS program.

—Theresa Lloyd,
Associate Professor of English and ASIS Director

After High Water

Every time the river comes out of its banks
I mark how high it gets, two months ago
the highest I'd ever seen. It cleared
the chain link fence and left only

top branches of the young walnut
visible, swirled by fast current. When
an occasional fish jumped in what
used to be the back yard, the dog

on the deck looked twice, as if her eyes
had lied. When the river receded
mud covered what water had hidden.
The river slipped out of the fence

and left a small trout flopping in mud.
I couldn't continue to watch, so
I took a bucket down the slippery yard
and scooped him up, then tossed him

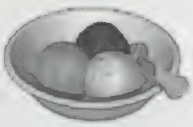
into retreating water. Weeks later when
silt left behind had hardened enough to
walk on, I pulled out sticks and debris
hung up in the walnut. Swift currents

had driven a floating log into its branches,
caught horizontally in a way that branches
don't grow. I pulled it free and the tree's
limbs moved slightly, back into place.

On days when you have to watch a floating
stick to see the river's flow, plastic
bags snagged in sycamore branches
remind us what water can do.

—Sandra Marshburn

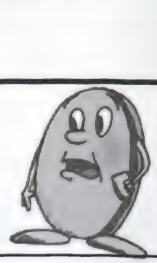
Sandra Marshburn teaches at West Virginia State University where she also edits the campus magazine, *Kanawha Review.* Her poems have appeared in recent issues of *Tar River Poetry* and *The Kerf.* Her chapbook, *Winter Beach,* was published in 2003 by Pudding House Publications.



SPEARS FAMILY REUNION NEWSLETTER

A Good Time Was Had By All

by Leigh Ann Preston and Kimberly Spears



This week on Toler Creek, the Spears Family hosted a reunion at the home of the clan's patriarch and matriarch, Dewey and Lotta Mae. Family flocked from all corners of the state of Kentucky, plus from as far away as Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia.

Kicking off the festivities, Art's boy, Eugene, announced he and his wife, Sarah, expect the first new addition to their family soon. While an exact due date and the sex of the baby remained unknown at the time of the party, the couple commented that they look forward to welcoming a new bundle of joy into "the greatest family in the world."

Speaking of new additions--Linda's youngest daughter, Chastity, confessed she married her long-time boyfriend, Al, three weeks ago. Rumors of a shotgun wedding abounded, but Chastity shot down those rumors quick. Her daddy's rifle rests safely in the back of Burnis' closet at Cave Run, she said, where the gun has made its home ever since Burnis borrowed it from Ronald a year ago. Chastity also asserted that children were not in the couple's immediate future. We'll see . . .

At the mention of his cabin, Burnis regaled the crowd with tales of his fishing and hunting adventures in Cave Run. Since retiring last year, Burnis has spent most of his time at that cabin. He boasted to all who'd pay him any mind about the abnormally big large-mouth bass he hooked and the 10-point buck he bagged with Ronald's gun. He invited everyone to come see, but to bear in mind that 10-point buck mounted over the fireplace lost six points in a freak ATV accident. It is, he lamented, a mere shell of its former glory.

As the day burned hotter, Katherine's husband, Larry, began whining for ice cream. Lotta Mae gave him a generous three scoops in a crock bowl along with a tablespoon. When Larry asked why the big spoon, Lotta Mae told him, "Don't worry, your mouth will fit around it."

Just before lunch, the family welcomed latecomer Harold. After receiving a coal-mining job offer a week prior, training for the job took him away just two days before the reunion. Amazed, family members asked him how he'd managed to complete the two-week training so quick. Harold said he had seen terrible things during the past two days and as a result realized life meant more to him than any job. Not fooled for a minute, Harold's daddy, Otis, piped up from the back of the crowd, "What terrible thing did you see, boy? A shovel?"

Amid the laughter, a few folks tried to comfort Harold, then it was everybody for himself as the family sat down for a tasty meal of fried chicken and all the fixin's. Everyone jumped when Timmy, Brenda and Anthony's 4-year-old boy, screamed bloody murder--"Mommy, Mommy! My taters tried to bite me!" Brenda rushed to Timmy's aid and found, sure enough, a set of teeth on his plate. She quickly fished them up and tossed them into the creek. Come to find out, they were Edna's. While putting out the food, she had lost her dentures in the depths of the potato salad. When Edna found out her teeth were now floating down the creek, she refused to open her mouth for the rest of the day. Several family members, especially Edna's husband, Wayne, thanked Brenda for the quiet afternoon.

Late in the afternoon, Donna's son, Jay, exhibited a talent for acrobatics when Mack's coonhound chased him up a tree. The dog, Rastus, had apparently been provoked when Jay teased him with a hot dog and then refused to feed it to him. Soon after that, Dewey and Lotta Mae's youngest son, Jerry, attempted to feed the pigs and accidentally set them loose. Old Hog, Dewey's pride and joy, proceeded to charge Jerry. In the process, Old Hog slipped between Jerry's legs, lifting him off the ground. The Spears family will not soon forget the sight of Jerry riding Old Hog backward and bareback across the garden.

The day ended when Harold and Jerry got in a heated argument over a game of horseshoes. Both drank heavily that evening and tempers flared as they accused one another of cheating. Dewey and Burnis tried to step in and calm the two boys, but Harold and Jerry refused to stop their childish quarreling. Yelling led to fist fighting which would have led to who knows what if Little Larry hadn't interrupted the whole brawl to alert everybody to an emergency involving Beth, Bill and Leslie's girl.

Little Larry said that Kenova Sue, while teaching Beth to crochet, noticed that she seemed to be having trouble with her left arm. When pressed for more information, Beth, who'll be 11 next month, said her left arm and the whole left side of her face had been numb for months. Why hadn't she told her mother? Kenova Sue asked, causing Beth to burst into tears. "I didn't want to cause any trouble," She said and fainted. Kenova Sue rushed to find Leslie. Leslie called the ambulance. The ambulance came during the argument over the horseshoes and no one would have noticed if Little Larry hadn't done it.

The reunion ended when everyone hurried to the hospital, where they spent the night anxiously waiting for news about Beth. The local hospital referred her to Cincinnati Children's Hospital. The doctors there say she has a cancerous brain tumor but after surgery to remove it, the doctor is optimistic Beth will make a full recovery.

The Spears family asks you keep Beth in your prayers. And we promise to keep you on our newsletter list. Have a blessed year.

Eastern Kentucky natives Leigh Ann Preston and Kimberly Spears attend Pikeville College in Pikeville, Ky., where both major in English and psychology. Their inspiration for this fiction piece came from observing the hilarity of cultural folkways in their hometown, where gossip serves as the primary source of news.

LEERY

"I'm always leery of strawberries from Mexico—they've traveled too far."
—comment overheard at a Bob Evans restaurant

I know a man who's leery of anything not wrapped in plastic,
not rubber-stamped with the seal of corporate America,
who won't eat foods that are white,
answer the phone after six p.m.,

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—Cathy Lentes

Cathy Lentes' work has also appeared in *Blueline* and *Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel.* Her poems are also included in the anthologies *I Have My Own Song For It: Modern Poems of Ohio* (University of Akron Press) and *O Taste And See: Food Poems* (Bottom Dog Press), winner of the 2004 American Poetry Anthology Award.

East Tennessee State University is one of 45 institutions in the Tennessee Board of Regents system, the sixth largest system of higher education in the nation. The Tennessee Board of Regents is the governing board for this system which is comprised of six universities, 13 community colleges, and 26 Tennessee Technology Centers. The TBR system enrolls more than 80 percent of all Tennessee students attending public institutions of higher education.

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Speaking of new additions--Linda's youngest

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"Now & Then captures the real spirit of Appalachi better than any other publication. I find news and features here that I never see anywhere else, plus wonderful fiction and poetry. I consider *Now & Then* indispensable reading for myself and for anybody else who truly cares about our region's rich heritage or about what's happening now."

Lee Smith

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Fred Chappell

"Now & Then keeps me in touch and informed, and is a must for anyone interested in the past, present, and future of the region."

Robert Morgan

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information, Beth, who'll be 11 next month, said her left arm and the whole left side of her face had been numb for months. Why hadn't she told her mother? Kenova Sue asked, causing Beth to burst into tears. "I didn't want to cause any trouble," She said and fainted. Kenova Sue rushed to find Leslie. Leslie called the ambulance. The ambulance came during the argument over the horseshoes and no one would have noticed if Little Larry hadn't done it.

The reunion ended when everyone hurried to the hospital, where they spent the night anxiously waiting for news about Beth. The local hospital referred her to Cincinnati Children's Hospital. The doctors there say she has a cancerous brain tumor but after surgery to remove it, the doctor is optimistic Beth will make a full recovery.

The Spears family asks you keep Beth in your prayers. And we promise to keep you on our newsletter list. Have a blessed year.

Eastern Kentucky natives Leigh Ann Preston and Kimberly Spears attend Pikeville College in Pikeville, Ky., where both major in English and psychology. Their inspiration for this fiction piece came from observing the hilarity of cultural folkways in their hometown, where gossip serves as the primary source of news.

LEERY

"I'm always leery of strawberries from Mexico—they've traveled too far."
—comment overheard at a Bob Evans restaurant

I know a man who's leery of anything not wrapped in plastic,
not rubber-stamped with the seal of corporate America,
who won't eat foods that are white,
answer the phone after six p.m.,
or wear a seatbelt.
His hell would be a farm-raised burger slathered with mayo,
greasy home fries, and a side of cottage cheese served at a Mom 'n' Pop
in some Podunk town where the cops stop you for entertainment
and your only hope is that someone will call in the night
looking for you from the real world.

Me, I'm leery of grapefruit from Texas arriving boxed in December,
each golden sphere tucked in tissue, each sliced center
pink as a flamingo; steaks and honeyed-hams ordered by Internet;
cakes and pies, cookies the size of Montana,
available baked fresh from a catalog.
I'm leery of strip malls,
and chihuahuas with manicures,
and people who aren't leery of these things at all.
However, I answer the phone, and wear my seatbelt,
and am rather fond of cottage cheese with small curds.

Perhaps I've traveled too far in life to be afraid of strawberries
or folks from Mexico, to be leery of much that seems
somehow grounded, but I will always be leery of opinions
broadcast too loudly. And you should be
leery of nosy people who write such things down.

—Cathy Lentes

Cathy Lentes' work has also appeared in *Blueline* and *Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel.* Her poems are also included in the anthologies *I Have My Own Song For It: Modern Poems of Ohio* (University of Akron Press) and *O Taste And See: Food Poems* (Bottom Dog Press), winner of the 2004 American Poetry Anthology Award.

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WELL CONNECTED

The Appalachian Region has easy access to the mountains' seasonal wonders. But digital, cable, and satellite access—and the expanded media messages that that access affords—is sometimes harder to come by. A recent report estimated 60 percent of the region has at least one high-speed Internet provider, compared to 88 percent nationally. This doubly connected home is on Route 74 in Western North Carolina.

NOW & THEN

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